

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5565

To promote classical and traditional architectural styles in Federal public buildings to enhance civic pride, reflect national heritage, and ensure aesthetic excellence in government infrastructure, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

Mr. BURCHETT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To promote classical and traditional architectural styles in Federal public buildings to enhance civic pride, reflect national heritage, and ensure aesthetic excellence in government infrastructure, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Make Federal Archi-
5 tecture Beautiful Again Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) 2025 DOLLARS.—The term “2025 dollars”
2 means dollars adjusted for inflation using the Bu-
3 reau of Economic Analysis’s Gross Domestic Prod-
4 uct price deflator and using 2025 as the base year.

5 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administra-
6 tion” means the General Services Administration.

7 (3) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
8 trator” means the Administrator of General Serv-
9 ices.

10 (4) APPLICABLE FEDERAL PUBLIC BUILDING.—
11 The term “applicable Federal public building”
12 means—

13 (A) all Federal courthouse and agency
14 headquarters;

15 (B) all Federal public buildings in the Na-
16 tional Capital Region; and

17 (C) all other Federal public buildings that
18 cost or are expected to cost more than
19 50,000,000 in 2025 dollars to design, build,
20 and finish, but does not include infrastructure
21 projects or land ports of entry.

22 (5) BRUTALIST ARCHITECTURE.—The term
23 “Brutalist architecture” means the style of architec-
24 ture that grew out of the early 20th-century mod-
25 ernist movement that is characterized by a massive

1 and block-like appearance with a rigid geometric
2 style and large-scale use of exposed poured concrete.

3 (6) CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “classical ar-
5 chitecture” means the architectural tradition—

6 (i) derived from the forms, principles,
7 and vocabulary of the architecture of
8 Greek and Roman antiquity; and

9 (ii) later developed and expanded on
10 by—

11 (I) Renaissance architects, in-
12 cluding Alberti, Brunelleschi, Michel-
13 angelo, and Palladio;

14 (II) Enlightenment masters, in-
15 cluding Robert Adam, John Soane,
16 and Christopher Wren;

17 (III) 19th Century architects, in-
18 cluding Benjamin Henry Latrobe,
19 Robert Mills, and Thomas U. Walter;
20 and

21 (IV) 20th Century practitioners,
22 including Julian Abele, Daniel
23 Burnham, Rafael Carmoega, Charles
24 F. McKim, John Russell Pope, Julia

1 Morgan, and the firm of Delano and
2 Aldrich.

3 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “classical ar-
4 chitecture” encompasses styles such as Neoclas-
5 sical, Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Beaux-
6 Arts, and Art Deco.

7 (7) DECONSTRUCTIVIST ARCHITECTURE.—The
8 term “Deconstructivist architecture” means the style
9 of architecture—

10 (A) generally known as
11 “deconstructivism”; and

12 (B) that emerged during the late 1980s
13 that features fragmentation, disorder, disconti-
14 nuity, distortion, skewed geometry, and the ap-
15 pearance of instability.

16 (8) GENERAL PUBLIC.—The term “general
17 public” means members of the public who are not—

18 (A) artists, architects, engineers, art or ar-
19 chitecture critics, instructors or professors of
20 art or architecture, or members of the building
21 industry; or

22 (B) affiliated with any interest group,
23 trade association, or any other organization
24 whose membership is financially affected by de-

1 cisions involving the design, construction, or re-
2 modeling of public buildings.

3 (9) PREFERRED ARCHITECTURE.—The term
4 “preferred architecture” means the architecture de-
5 scribed in section 3(3).

6 (10) PUBLIC BUILDING.—The term “public
7 building” has the meaning given such term in sec-
8 tion 3301(a) of title 40, United States Code.

9 (11) TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE.—The term
10 “traditional architecture” means—

11 (A) classical architecture; and

12 (B) the historic humanistic architecture,
13 including—

14 (i) Gothic;

15 (ii) Romanesque;

16 (iii) Second Empire;

17 (iv) Pueblo Revival;

18 (v) Spanish Colonial; and

19 (vi) other Mediterranean styles of ar-
20 chitecture historically rooted in various re-
21 gions of America.

22 **SEC. 3. POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.**

23 It is the policy of the United States that—

24 (1) applicable Federal public buildings should—

25 (A) uplift and beautify public spaces;

1 (B) inspire the human spirit;

2 (C) ennoble the United States;

3 (D) command respect from the general
4 public;

5 (E) be visually identifiable as civic build-
6 ings; and

7 (F) as appropriate, respect regional archi-
8 tectural heritage;

9 (2) building designs should be selected with
10 substantial input from the local community;

11 (3) architecture, particularly traditional and
12 classical architecture, that meets the criteria de-
13 scribed in paragraph (1), is the preferred architec-
14 ture for applicable Federal public buildings;

15 (4) in the District of Columbia, classical archi-
16 tecture shall be the preferred and default architec-
17 ture for Federal public buildings absent exceptional
18 factors necessitating another kind of architecture;

19 (5) where the architecture of applicable Federal
20 public buildings diverges from the preferred architec-
21 ture set forth in paragraph (1), great care and con-
22 sideration must be taken to choose a design that—

23 (A) commands respect from the general
24 public; and

1 (B) clearly conveys to the general public
 2 the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability
 3 America's system of self-government;

4 (6) when renovating, reducing, or expanding ap-
 5 plicable Federal public buildings that do not meet
 6 the criteria described in paragraph (1), the feasi-
 7 bility and potential expense of building redesign to
 8 meet those criteria should be examined; and

9 (7) where feasible and economical, such rede-
 10 sign should be given substantial consideration, espe-
 11 cially with regard to the building's exterior.

12 **SEC. 4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FEDERAL ARCHITEC-**
 13 **TURE.**

14 Agencies shall, to the extent practicable, adhere to
 15 the following Guiding Principles for Federal Architecture:

16 (1) Provide requisite and adequate facilities in
 17 an architectural style and form that is distinguished
 18 and will reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and
 19 stability of the American National Government, in-
 20 cluding through the use of the following:

21 (A) By their proven ability to meet these
 22 requirements, classical and traditional architec-
 23 ture are preferred modes of architectural de-
 24 sign. This preference does not exclude the pos-

1 sibility of alternative styles in appropriate cir-
2 cumstances.

3 (B) Major emphasis should be placed on
4 the choice of design that embody architectural
5 excellence.

6 (C) Specific attention should be paid to the
7 possibilities of incorporating into such designs
8 qualities that reflect the regional architectural
9 traditions of that part of the Nation in which
10 buildings are located.

11 (D) Where appropriate, fine art should be
12 incorporated in the designs, with emphasis on
13 the work of living American artists.

14 (E) Designs shall adhere to sound con-
15 struction practice and utilize materials, meth-
16 ods, and equipment proven dependability.

17 (F) Buildings shall be economical to build,
18 operate, and maintain, and should be accessible
19 to the handicapped.

20 (2) Design must flow from the needs of the
21 Government and the aspirations and preferences of
22 the American people to the architectural profession,
23 and not vice versa, including through the use of the
24 following:

1 (A) The Government should be willing to
2 pay some additional cost to avoid excessive uni-
3 formity in design of Federal buildings.

4 (B) Competitions for the design of Federal
5 buildings should be held where appropriate.

6 (C) The advice of distinguished architects
7 practiced in classical or traditional architecture
8 ought to, as a rule, be sought prior to the
9 award of important design contracts.

10 (3) The choice and development of the building
11 site should be considered the first step of the design
12 process, including through the use of the following:

13 (A) This choice should be made in coopera-
14 tion with local agencies.

15 (B) Special attention should be paid to the
16 general ensemble of streets and public places of
17 which Federal buildings will form a part.

18 (C) Where possible, buildings should be lo-
19 cated so as to permit a generous development
20 of landscape.

21 **SEC. 5. GSA REQUIREMENTS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall adhere to
23 the policy of the United States described in sections 3 and
24 4 and shall expeditiously update GSA policies and proce-

1 dures to incorporate such policies and principles and ad-
2 vance the purpose of this Act.

3 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The Administrator shall—

4 (1) ensure that GSA architects whose duties in-
5 clude reviewing, assisting with, or approving the se-
6 lection of architects or designs for applicable Federal
7 public buildings have formal training in, or substan-
8 tial and significant experience with, classical or tra-
9 ditional architecture;

10 (2) create the position of senior advisor for ar-
11 chitectural design, for an individual with specialized
12 experience in classical architecture, to help develop
13 GSA procedures, advise on architectural standards,
14 and provide guidance during design evaluations or
15 design juries;

16 (3) where the design of an applicable Federal
17 public building is selected pursuant to a design-build
18 competition under section 3309 of title 41, United
19 States Code, list experience with classical or tradi-
20 tional architecture as specialized experience and
21 technical competence in the phase-1 solicitation, and
22 give substantial weight to these factors when evalu-
23 ating which offerors will be advanced to phase 2;
24 and

1 (4) consistent with sections 4302 and 4312 of
2 title 5, United States Code, make advancing the pur-
3 poses and implementing the policies of this Act a
4 critical performance element in the individual per-
5 formance plans of the GSA Chief Architect and ap-
6 propriate subordinate employees in the GSA Public
7 Buildings Service involved in selecting designs for
8 applicable Federal public buildings.

9 (c) REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGN COMPETITION.—
10 Where GSA intends to select a building design pursuant
11 to a design competition, the Administrator shall—

12 (1) actively recruit architectural firms and, as
13 applicable, designers with experience in classical and
14 traditional architecture to enter such competition;
15 and

16 (2) to the extent practicable, ensure that mul-
17 tiple design modes are advanced to the final evalua-
18 tion round of such competition.

19 (d) NOTIFICATION.—In the event the Administrator
20 proposes to approve a design for a new applicable Federal
21 public building that diverges from the preferred architec-
22 ture, including Brutalist or Deconstructivist architecture
23 or any design derived from or related to these types of
24 architecture, the Administrator shall notify the President
25 through the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

1 not less than 30 days before GSA could reject such design
2 without incurring substantial expenditures. Such notifica-
3 tion shall set forth the reasons the Administrator proposes
4 to approve such design, including—

5 (1) a detailed explanation of why the Adminis-
6 trator believes selecting such design is justified, with
7 particular focus on whether such design is as beau-
8 tiful and reflective of the dignity, enterprise, vigor,
9 and stability of the American system of self-govern-
10 ment as alternative designs of comparable cost of
11 using preferred architecture;

12 (2) the total expected cost of adopting the pro-
13 posed design, including estimated maintenance and
14 replacement costs throughout its expected lifecycle;
15 and

16 (3) a description of the designs using preferred
17 architecture seriously considered for such project
18 and the total expected cost of adopting such designs,
19 including estimated maintenance and replacement
20 costs throughout their expected lifecycles.

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