

.....
(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To criminalize stalking using an unauthorized geotracking device, modify the 10-year marriage rule relating to spouse's and surviving spouse's insurance benefits in cases of domestic violence, ensure that healthcare providers can assist survivors of domestic violence, provide additional housing protections for survivors of domestic violence, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. SYKES introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

To criminalize stalking using an unauthorized geotracking device, modify the 10-year marriage rule relating to spouse's and surviving spouse's insurance benefits in cases of domestic violence, ensure that healthcare providers can assist survivors of domestic violence, provide additional housing protections for survivors of domestic violence, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Safer Homes and
3 Families Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. STALKING PENALTY.**

5 Section 2261A of title 18, United States Code, is
6 amended—

7 (1) by striking “Whoever” and inserting “(a)
8 IN GENERAL.—Whoever”;

9 (2) by inserting after “uses the mail,” the fol-
10 lowing: “uses an unauthorized geotracking device”;
11 and

12 (3) by adding at the end the following:

13 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

14 “(1) The term ‘geotracking device’ means an
15 electronic or mechanical device that permits a person
16 to remotely determine or track the position and
17 movement of another person.

18 “(2) The term ‘unauthorized’ means, with re-
19 spect to a geotracking device, that the person on
20 whom the geotracking device is being used has not
21 consented to such use or otherwise revoked consent
22 to such use.”.

1 **SEC. 3. MODIFICATION OF 10-YEAR MARRIAGE RULE IN**
2 **CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 216(d) of the Social Secu-
4 rity Act (42 U.S.C. 416(d)) is amended by adding at the
5 end the following:

6 “(9)(A) In the case of a divorced woman de-
7 scribed in paragraph (1) or (2) or a divorced man
8 described in paragraph (4) or (5) who provides to
9 the Commissioner of Social Security a finding made
10 by a court of law that the divorced woman or di-
11 vorced man was the victim of domestic violence com-
12 mitted by the spouse during the course of the mar-
13 riage, such paragraph as may be applicable with re-
14 spect to such divorced woman or divorced man shall
15 be applied for purposes of this title by substituting
16 ‘5 years’ for ‘10 years’.

17 “(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the
18 term ‘domestic violence’ has the meaning given such
19 term in section 40002(a) of the Violence Against
20 Women Act of 1994.”

21 (b) TERMINATION OF WIFE’S INSURANCE BENE-
22 FITS.—Section 202(b) of the Social Security Act (42
23 U.S.C. 402(b)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
24 lowing:

25 “(5) In the case of any divorced wife who provides
26 to the Commissioner of Social Security a finding made by

1 a court of law that the divorced wife was the victim of
2 domestic violence (as defined in section 216(d)(9)(B))
3 committed by the spouse during the course of the mar-
4 riage, clause (ii) of paragraph (1)(G) shall be applied by
5 substituting ‘5 years’ for ‘10 years’.”.

6 (c) **TERMINATION OF HUSBAND’S INSURANCE BENE-**
7 **FITS.**—Section 202(c) of the Social Security Act (42
8 U.S.C. 402(c)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
9 lowing:

10 “(5) In the case of any divorced husband who pro-
11 vides to the Commissioner of Social Security a finding
12 made by a court of law that the divorced husband was
13 the victim of domestic violence (as defined in section
14 216(d)(9)(B)) committed by the spouse, clause (ii) of
15 paragraph (1)(G) shall be applied by substituting ‘5 years’
16 for ‘10 years’.”.

17 (d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by
18 this section shall apply with respect to monthly insurance
19 benefits for months beginning at least 18 months after
20 the date of enactment of this Act.

21 **SEC. 4. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ON TRAUMA-IN-**
22 **FORMED, VICTIM-CENTERED TRAINING FOR**
23 **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.**

24 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subtitle Q of title IV of the Vio-
25 lent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (34

1 U.S.C. 12513 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
2 the following:

3 **“SEC. 41702. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM ON TRAUMA-IN-**
4 **FORMED, VICTIM-CENTERED TRAINING FOR**
5 **HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.**

6 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

7 “(1) the term ‘Attorney General’ means the At-
8 torney General, acting through the Director of the
9 Office on Violence Against Women;

10 “(2) the term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary
11 of the Department of Health and Human Services;

12 “(3) the term ‘covered individual’ means an in-
13 dividual who interfaces with victims of domestic vio-
14 lence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking,
15 including—

16 “(A) an individual working for or on behalf
17 of an eligible entity;

18 “(B) an administrator or personnel of a
19 school, university, or other educational program
20 or activity (including a campus police officer or
21 a school resource officer); and

22 “(C) an emergency services employee;

23 “(4) the term ‘eligible entity’ means a facility
24 as described in paragraph (1), (2), (4), (5), or (6)

1 of section 1624 of the Public Health Service Act (42
2 U.S.C. 300s-3); and

3 “(5) the term ‘mandatory partner’ means a na-
4 tional, regional, or local victim services organization
5 or agency working in collaboration with a facility de-
6 scribed in paragraph (4).

7 “(b) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in
9 consultation with the Secretary, shall award grants
10 on a competitive basis to eligible entities to collabo-
11 rate with their mandatory partners to carry out the
12 demonstration program under this section by imple-
13 menting evidence-based or promising investigative
14 policies and practices to incorporate trauma-in-
15 formed, victim-centered techniques designed to—

16 “(A) prevent re-traumatization of the vic-
17 tim;

18 “(B) ensure that covered individuals use
19 evidence-based practices to identify, respond to,
20 and treat cases of domestic violence, dating vio-
21 lence, sexual assault, and stalking;

22 “(C) increase collaboration among stake-
23 holders who are part of the coordinated commu-
24 nity response to domestic violence, dating vio-
25 lence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

1 “(D) evaluate the effectiveness of the
2 training process and content.

3 “(2) AWARD BASIS.—The Attorney General, in
4 consultation with the Secretary, shall award grants
5 under this section to multiple eligible entities for use
6 in a variety of settings and communities, including—

7 “(A) urban, suburban, Tribal, remote, and
8 rural areas;

9 “(B) college campuses; or

10 “(C) traditionally underserved commu-
11 nities.

12 “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives
13 a grant under this section shall use the grant to—

14 “(1) train covered individuals associated with
15 the eligible entity to use evidence-based, trauma-in-
16 formed, and victim-centered techniques to identify
17 and treat individuals who have experienced domestic
18 violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking,
19 including by—

20 “(A) customizing treatment approaches to
21 ensure a culturally and linguistically appro-
22 priate approach to the community being served;

23 “(B) becoming proficient in understanding
24 and responding to complex cases, including

1 cases of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
2 ual assault, or stalking—

3 “(i) facilitated by alcohol or drugs;

4 “(ii) involving strangulation;

5 “(iii) committed by a non-stranger;

6 “(iv) committed by an individual of
7 the same sex as the victim;

8 “(v) involving a victim with a dis-
9 ability;

10 “(vi) involving a male victim; or

11 “(vii) involving a lesbian, gay, bisex-
12 ual, or transgender (commonly referred to
13 as ‘LGBT’) victim;

14 “(C) developing collaborative relationships
15 between—

16 “(i) healthcare providers, law enforce-
17 ment officers, and other members of the
18 response team; and

19 “(ii) the community being served; and

20 “(D) developing an understanding of how
21 to define, identify, and correctly classify a re-
22 port of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
23 ual assault, or stalking; and

24 “(2) promote the efforts of the eligible entity to
25 improve the response of covered individuals to do-

1 mestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and
2 stalking through various communication channels,
3 such as the website of the eligible entity, social
4 media, print materials, and community meetings, in
5 order to ensure that all covered individuals associ-
6 ated with the eligible entity are aware of those ef-
7 forts and included in trainings, to the extent prac-
8 ticable.

9 “(d) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM TRAININGS ON
10 TRAUMA-INFORMED, VICTIM-CENTERED APPROACHES.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General, in
12 consultation with the Secretary, shall identify
13 trainings for covered individuals, in existence as of
14 the date on which the Attorney General begins to so-
15 licit applications for grants under this section,
16 that—

17 “(A) employ a trauma-informed, victim-
18 centered approach to domestic violence, dating
19 violence, sexual assault, and stalking; and

20 “(B) focus on the fundamentals of—

21 “(i) trauma responses;

22 “(ii) the impact of trauma on victims
23 of domestic violence, dating violence, sex-
24 ual assault, and stalking; and

1 “(iii) techniques for effectively treat-
2 ing the medical consequences of domestic
3 violence, dating violence, sexual assault,
4 and stalking.

5 “(2) SELECTION.—An eligible entity that re-
6 ceives a grant under this section shall select one or
7 more of the approaches employed by a training iden-
8 tified under paragraph (1) to test at the eligible en-
9 tity.

10 “(e) EVALUATIONS.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General and
12 the Secretary, in consultation with the Director of
13 the National Institute of Justice, shall require each
14 eligible entity that receives a grant under this sec-
15 tion to identify a research partner, preferably a local
16 research partner, to—

17 “(A) design a system for generating and
18 collecting the appropriate data to facilitate an
19 independent process or impact evaluation of the
20 use of the grant funds;

21 “(B) periodically conduct an evaluation de-
22 scribed in subparagraph (A); and

23 “(C) periodically make publicly available,
24 during the grant period—

1 “(i) preliminary results of the evalua-
2 tions conducted under subparagraph (B);
3 and

4 “(ii) recommendations for improving
5 the use of the grant funds.

6 “(2) GAO REPORT.—Not later than three years
7 after the date of the enactment of this section, the
8 Comptroller General of the United States shall sub-
9 mit to the Committees on Ways and Means, Energy
10 and Commerce, and Judiciary of the House of Rep-
11 resentatives and the Committees on Judiciary and
12 on Finance of the Senate a report summarizing the
13 implementation of this section.

14 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
15 are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General
16 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028
17 to carry out this section.”.

18 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents
19 for the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act
20 of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 10101 note) is amended by inserting
21 after the item related to section 41701 the following:

 “41702. Demonstration program on trauma-informed, victim-centered training
 for healthcare providers.”.

1 **SEC. 5. PROHIBITION ON THE IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR**
2 **EARLY LEASE TERMINATION.**

3 Section 41411 of the Violence Against Women Act
4 of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12491) is amended by adding at the
5 end the following:

6 “(h) PROHIBITION ON THE IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR
7 EARLY LEASE TERMINATION.—

8 “(1) VOLUNTARY EXIT.—An applicant for or
9 tenant of housing assisted under a covered housing
10 program may voluntarily exit a lease for housing
11 earlier than the end date of such lease on the basis
12 that the applicant or tenant has been a victim of do-
13 mestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or
14 stalking.

15 “(2) FEE PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding any
16 lease agreement, an applicant or tenant described in
17 paragraph (1) may not be charged a fee for exiting
18 a lease for housing earlier than the end date of such
19 lease on the basis described in paragraph (1).”.