117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize law enforcement agencies to use COPS grants for recruitment activities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. COONS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize law enforcement agencies to use COPS grants for recruitment activities, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Recruit and Retain Act''.

SEC. 2. IMPROVING COPS GRANTS FOR POLICE HIRING PURPOSES.

(a) GRANT USE EXPANSION.—Section 1701(b) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381(b)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (23) as paragraphs (6) through (24), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) to support hiring activities by law enforcement agencies experiencing declines in officer recruitment applications by reducing application-related fees, such as fees for background checks, psychological evaluations, and testing.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 1701(b)(23) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381(b)(23)) is amended by striking ''(21)'' and inserting ''(22)''.

SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.

Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (i) through (m) as subsections (j) through (n), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (h) the following:

''(i) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Not more than 2 percent of a grant made for the hiring or rehiring of additional career law enforcement officers may be used for costs incurred to administer such grant.''.

SEC. 4. PIPELINE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amended by inserting after subsection (n) the following:

''(o) COPS PIPELINE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.—

''(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'eligible entity' means a law enforcement agency in partnership with not less than 1 educational institution, which may include 1 or any combination of the following:

''(A) An elementary school.

''(B) A post-secondary school.

''(C) An institution of higher education.

''(D) A Hispanic-serving institution.

''(E) A historically Black college or university.

''(F) A Tribal college.

''(2) GRANTS.—The Attorney General shall award competitive grants to eligible entities for recruiting activities that—

''(A) support substantial student engagement for the exploration of potential future career opportunities in law enforcement;

''(B) strengthen recruitment by law enforcement agencies experiencing a decline in recruits, or high rates of resignations or retirements;

''(C) enhance community interactions between local youth and law enforcement agencies that are designed to increase recruiting; and

''(D) otherwise improve the outcomes of local law enforcement recruitment through activities such as dedicated programming for students, work-based learning opportunities, project-based learning, mentoring, community liaisons, career or job fairs, work site visits, job shadowing, apprenticeships, or skills-based internships.

''(3) FUNDING.—Of the amounts made available to carry out this part for a fiscal year, the Attorney General may use not more than $3,000,000 to carry out this subsection.''.

SEC. 5. COPS GRANT GUIDANCE FOR AGENCIES OPERATING BELOW BUDGETED STRENGTH.

Section 1704 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10384) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) GUIDANCE FOR UNDERSTAFFED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) COVERED APPLICANT.—The term 'covered applicant' means an applicant for a hiring grant under this part seeking funding for a law enforcement agency operating below the budgeted strength of the law enforcement agency.

''(B) BUDGETED STRENGTH.—The term 'budgeted strength' means the employment of the maximum number of sworn law enforcement officers the budget of a law enforcement agency allows the agency to employ.

''(2) PROCEDURES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall establish consistent procedures for covered applicants, including guidance that—

''(A) clarifies that covered applicants remain eligible for funding under this part; and

"(B) enables covered applicants to attest that the funding from a grant awarded under this part is not being used by the law enforcement agency to supplant State or local funds, as described in subsection (a).

"(3) PAPERWORK REDUCTION.—In developing the procedures and guidance under paragraph (2), the Attorney General shall take measures to reduce paperwork requirements for grants to covered applicants.".

SEC. 6. STUDY ON POLICE RECRUITMENT.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to consider the comprehensive effects of recruitment and attrition rates on Federal, State, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies in the United States, to identify—

(A) the primary reasons that law enforcement officers—

(i) join law enforcement agencies; and

(ii) resign or retire from law enforcement agencies;

(B) how the reasons described in subparagraph (A) may have changed over time;

(C) the effects of recruitment and attrition on public safety;

(D) the effects of electronic media on recruitment efforts;

(E) barriers to the recruitment and retention of Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers; and

(F) recommendations for potential ways to address barriers to the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers, including the barriers identified in subparagraph (E).

(2) REPRESENTATIVE CROSS-SECTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall endeavor to ensure accurate representation of law enforcement agencies in the study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) by surveying a broad cross-section of law enforcement agencies—

(i) from various regions of the United States;

(ii) of different sizes; and

(iii) from rural, suburban, and urban jurisdictions.

(B) METHODS DESCRIPTION.—The study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall in-

clude in the report under subsection (b) a description of the methods used to identify a representative sample of law enforcement agencies.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 540 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report containing the study conducted under subsection (a); and

(2) make the report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available online.

(c) CONFIDENTIALITY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall ensure that the study conducted under subsection (a) protects the privacy of participating law enforcement agencies.