

119<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To direct the Attorney General to establish a grant program to establish, implement, and administer violent incident clearance and technology investigative methods, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. BOOKER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

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**A BILL**

To direct the Attorney General to establish a grant program to establish, implement, and administer violent incident clearance and technology investigative methods, 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 “Violent Incident Clear-  
5       ance and Technological Investigative Methods Act of  
6       2026” or the “VICTIM Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM WITH RESPECT TO VIOLENT INCI-**  
2 **DENT CLEARANCE AND TECHNOLOGICAL IN-**  
3 **VESTIGATIVE METHODS.**

4 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 (1) CLEARANCE BY ARREST.—The term “clear-  
6 ance by arrest”, with respect to an offense reported  
7 to a law enforcement agency, means the law enforce-  
8 ment agency—

9 (A) has—

10 (i) arrested not less than 1 person for  
11 the offense;

12 (ii) charged the person described in  
13 clause (i) with the commission of the of-  
14 fense; and

15 (iii) referred the person described in  
16 clause (i) for prosecution for the offense;  
17 or

18 (B) has cited an individual under the age  
19 of 18 to appear in juvenile court or before an-  
20 other juvenile authority with respect to the of-  
21 fense, regardless of whether a physical arrest  
22 occurred.

23 (2) CLEARANCE BY EXCEPTION.—The term  
24 “clearance by exception”, with respect to an offense  
25 reported to a law enforcement agency, means the  
26 law enforcement agency—

1 (A) has identified not less than 1 person  
2 suspected of the offense; and

3 (B) with respect to the suspect described  
4 in subparagraph (A), has—

5 (i) gathered enough evidence to—

6 (I) support an arrest of the sus-  
7 pect;

8 (II) make a charge against the  
9 suspect; and

10 (III) refer the suspect for pros-  
11 ecution;

12 (ii) identified the location of the sus-  
13 pect so that the suspect could be taken  
14 into custody immediately; and

15 (iii) encountered a circumstance out-  
16 side the control of the law enforcement  
17 agency that prohibits the agency from ar-  
18 resting the suspect, charging the suspect,  
19 or referring the suspect for prosecution, in-  
20 cluding—

21 (I) the death of the suspect;

22 (II) the refusal of the victim to  
23 cooperate with the prosecution after  
24 the suspect has been identified; or

1 (III) the denial of extradition be-  
2 cause the suspect committed an of-  
3 fense in another jurisdiction and is  
4 being prosecuted for that offense.

5 (3) CLEARANCE RATE.—The term “clearance  
6 rate”, with respect to a law enforcement agency,  
7 means the quotient obtained by dividing—

8 (A) the number of offenses cleared by the  
9 law enforcement agency, including through  
10 clearance by arrest and clearance by exception;  
11 by

12 (B) the total number of offenses reported  
13 to the law enforcement agency.

14 (4) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-  
15 ty” means a State, Tribal, or local law enforcement  
16 agency or a group of such law enforcement agencies.

17 (5) GRANT RECIPIENT.—The term “grant re-  
18 cipient” means a recipient of a grant under the Pro-  
19 gram.

20 (6) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.—The term  
21 “law enforcement agency” means a public agency  
22 charged with policing functions, including any com-  
23 ponent bureau of the agency (such as a govern-  
24 mental victim services program or village public  
25 safety officer program), including an agency com-

1 posed of officers or persons referred to in subpara-  
2 graph (B) or (C) of section 2(10) of the Indian Law  
3 Enforcement Reform Act (25 U.S.C. 2801(10)).

4 (7) PROGRAM.—The term “Program” means  
5 the grant program established under subsection  
6 (b)(1).

7 (8) RURAL.—The term “rural” means an area  
8 that is not located in a metropolitan statistical area,  
9 as defined by the Office of Management and Budget.

10 (b) GRANT PROGRAM.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
12 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney  
13 General shall establish a grant program within the  
14 Office of Community Oriented Policing Services  
15 under which the Attorney General awards grants to  
16 eligible entities to establish, implement, and admin-  
17 ister violent incident clearance and technological in-  
18 vestigative methods.

19 (2) APPLICATIONS.—An eligible entity seeking  
20 a grant under the Program shall submit to the At-  
21 torney General an application at such time, in such  
22 manner, and containing or accompanied by—

23 (A) such information as the Attorney Gen-  
24 eral may reasonably require; and

1 (B) a description of each eligible project  
2 under paragraph (4) that the grant will fund.

3 (3) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS.—The  
4 Attorney General, in selecting a recipient of a grant  
5 under the Program, shall—

6 (A) consider solely the specific plan and  
7 activities proposed by the applicant to improve  
8 clearance rates for homicides and firearm-re-  
9 lated violent crimes, notwithstanding other De-  
10 partment policies for grant eligibility; and

11 (B) develop criteria to ensure that funds  
12 are distributed to rural and urban applicants.

13 (4) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—A grant recipient  
14 shall use the grant for activities with the specific ob-  
15 jective of improving clearance rates for homicides  
16 and firearm-related violent crimes, including—

17 (A) hiring and training additional per-  
18 sonnel who will be assigned to investigate homi-  
19 cides and firearm-related violent crimes;

20 (B) ensuring the retention of personnel  
21 who are assigned to investigate homicides and  
22 firearm-related violent crimes as of the date of  
23 receipt of the grant;

1 (C) hiring and training personnel for col-  
2 lection, processing, and forensic testing of evi-  
3 dence;

4 (D) acquiring, upgrading, or replacing in-  
5 vestigative, evidence-processing, or forensic test-  
6 ing technology or equipment;

7 (E) developing competitive and evidence-  
8 based programs to improve clearance rates for  
9 homicides and firearm-related violent crimes;

10 (F) hiring and training of personnel to  
11 analyze violent crime and the temporal and geo-  
12 graphic trends among homicides and firearm-re-  
13 lated violent crimes;

14 (G) retaining experts to conduct a detailed  
15 analysis of homicides and firearm-related vio-  
16 lent crimes using Gun Violence Problem Anal-  
17 ysis (commonly known as “GVPA”) or a similar  
18 research methodology;

19 (H) development and implementation of  
20 policies that safeguard civil rights and civil lib-  
21 erties during the collection, processing, and fo-  
22 rensic testing of evidence;

23 (I) establishing programs to support offi-  
24 cers who experience stress or trauma as a result

1 of responding to or investigating homicides or  
2 other violent crime incidents;

3 (J) developing policies, procedures, and  
4 training to improve clearance rates for homi-  
5 cides and firearm-related violent crimes, includ-  
6 ing implementing best practices relating to—

7 (i) improving internal agency coopera-  
8 tion, organizational oversight and account-  
9 ability, and supervision of investigations;

10 (ii) developing specific goals and per-  
11 formance metrics for both investigators  
12 and investigative units;

13 (iii) strengthening relationships with  
14 communities the agency serves; and

15 (iv) collaboration with and among  
16 other law enforcement agencies and crimi-  
17 nal justice organizations;

18 (K) ensuring victims of firearm-related vio-  
19 lent crimes, and family members of victims of  
20 homicides, have appropriate access to emer-  
21 gency food, housing, clothing, travel, and trans-  
22 portation;

23 (L) training to address the needs of vic-  
24 tims of firearm-related violent crimes, and fam-  
25 ily members of victims of homicides, or collabo-

1 rating with trained victim advocates and spe-  
2 cialists to better meet the needs of victims and  
3 family members of victims;

4 (M) developing best practices for improv-  
5 ing access to and acceptance of victim services,  
6 including victim services that promote medical  
7 and psychological wellness, ongoing counseling,  
8 legal advice, and financial compensation;

9 (N) training personnel in trauma-informed  
10 interview techniques; and

11 (O) ensuring language and disability access  
12 supports are provided to victims and their fami-  
13 lies so that victims can exercise their rights and  
14 participate in the criminal justice process.

15 (c) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Grant funds  
16 made available under this section shall be used to supple-  
17 ment, not supplant, Federal and non-Federal funds avail-  
18 able for carrying out the activities described in this sec-  
19 tion.

20 (d) HIRING.—A grant recipient using funds for hir-  
21 ing personnel under subsection (b)(4)(A) shall make a  
22 good faith effort to determine whether an applicant with  
23 prior law enforcement experience has a disciplinary record  
24 or internal investigation record by—

1           (1) conducting a search of the National Decer-  
2           tification Index and, if available, the National Law  
3           Enforcement Accountability Database; or

4           (2) requesting the personnel record of the appli-  
5           cant from each law enforcement agency that em-  
6           ployed the applicant.

7           (e) REPORT BY GRANT RECIPIENT.—Not later than  
8           1 year after receiving a grant under the Program, and  
9           each year thereafter until a final report is submitted re-  
10          garding fiscal year 2032, a grant recipient shall submit  
11          to the Attorney General a report on the activities carried  
12          out using the grant during the preceding fiscal year, in-  
13          cluding, if applicable—

14           (1) the number of personnel assigned to inves-  
15           tigate homicides and firearm-related violent crimes  
16           hired by the grant recipient;

17           (2) the number of personnel hired for collecting,  
18           processing, and forensic testing of evidence by the  
19           grant recipient;

20           (3) a description of any training that is de-  
21           signed to assist in the solving of homicides and fire-  
22           arm-related violent crimes and improve clearance  
23           rates;

24           (4) any new investigative, evidence-processing,  
25           or forensic technology or equipment purchased or

1 any upgrades made to existing (as of the date on  
2 which the grant was awarded) investigative, evi-  
3 dence-processing, or forensic technology or equip-  
4 ment, and the associated cost;

5 (5) an assessment of investigative, evidence-  
6 processing, or forensic technology or equipment pur-  
7 chased with the grant to determine whether the  
8 technology or equipment satisfies the objectives of  
9 the use of the technology or equipment in increasing  
10 clearance rates, and any policies in place to govern  
11 the use of the technology or equipment;

12 (6) the internal policies and oversight used to  
13 ensure that any technology purchased through the  
14 grant for the purposes of improving clearance rates  
15 does not violate the civil rights and civil liberties of  
16 individuals;

17 (7) data regarding clearance rates for homicides  
18 and firearm-related violent crimes, including the rate  
19 of clearances by arrest and clearances by exception,  
20 and crime trends from within each jurisdiction in  
21 which the grant recipient carried out activities sup-  
22 ported by the grant;

23 (8) data on the race, sex, and age of victims of  
24 homicides and firearm-related violent crimes;

1           (9) data on the race, sex, and age of suspects  
2 of homicides and firearm-related violent crimes;

3           (10) the length and outcomes of each investiga-  
4 tion, including whether the investigation was cleared  
5 by arrest or exception; and

6           (11) to the extent reasonably available, identi-  
7 fication of the services most used by victims and  
8 their families and identification of additional services  
9 needed.

10       (f) CLEARANCE RATE REPORTING.—If 2 or more law  
11 enforcement agencies collaborate on a criminal investiga-  
12 tion that results in a clearance, only the agency that initi-  
13 ated the investigation shall include that clearance in the  
14 report submitted under subsection (e).

15       (g) GRANT OVERSIGHT.—

16           (1) IN GENERAL.—All grants awarded by the  
17 Attorney General under this section shall be subject  
18 to the requirements under this subsection.

19           (2) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—

20           (A) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the  
21 term “unresolved audit finding” means a find-  
22 ing in the final audit report of the Inspector  
23 General of the Department of Justice that the  
24 audited grant recipient has used grant funds  
25 for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise

1 unallowable cost that is not closed or resolved  
2 within 12 months from the date on which the  
3 final audit report is issued.

4 (B) AUDITS.—

5 (i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the  
6 first fiscal year after the date of establish-  
7 ment of the Program, and in each fiscal  
8 year thereafter, the Inspector General of  
9 the Department of Justice shall conduct  
10 audits of grant recipients under this sec-  
11 tion to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of  
12 funds by grant recipients.

13 (ii) SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPI-  
14 ENTS FOR AUDIT.—The Inspector General  
15 of the Department of Justice shall deter-  
16 mine the appropriate number of grant re-  
17 cipients to be audited each year.

18 (C) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A grant re-  
19 cipient that is found to have an unresolved  
20 audit finding shall not be eligible to receive  
21 grant funds under this section during the fiscal  
22 year following the 12-month period after the  
23 final audit report has been issued.

24 (3) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—Not later than  
25 the end of the fiscal year during which audits com-

1 mence under paragraph (2)(B)(i), and each fiscal  
2 year thereafter, the Attorney General shall submit to  
3 the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee  
4 on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee  
5 on the Judiciary and the Committee on Appropria-  
6 tions of the House of Representatives a certification,  
7 including—

8 (A) whether—

9 (i) all audits conducted by the Office  
10 of the Inspector General of the Depart-  
11 ment of Justice under paragraph (2) have  
12 been completed and reviewed by the appro-  
13 priate Assistant Attorney General; and

14 (ii) all mandatory exclusions required  
15 under paragraph (2)(C) have been issued;  
16 and

17 (B) a list of any grant recipients excluded  
18 from receiving grant funds under paragraph  
19 (2)(C) from the previous fiscal year.

20 (h) NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE EVALUATION  
21 AND REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

22 (1) EVALUATION.—Not later than 2 years after  
23 the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years  
24 thereafter, the Director of the National Institute of  
25 Justice shall conduct an evaluation of—

1 (A) the practices deployed by grant recipi-  
2 ents to identify policies and procedures that  
3 have successfully improved clearance rates for  
4 homicides and firearm-related violent crimes;  
5 and

6 (B) the efficacy of any services provided to  
7 victims and family members of victims of homi-  
8 cides and firearm-related violent crimes.

9 (2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30  
10 days after completion of an evaluation by the Direc-  
11 tor of the National Institute of Justice under para-  
12 graph (1), the Attorney General shall submit to Con-  
13 gress a report including—

14 (A) the results of the evaluation; and

15 (B) information reported by each grant re-  
16 cipient under subsection (e).

17 (i) APPLICATION PROCESS.—

18 (1) BARRIERS.—The Attorney General shall de-  
19 termine whether barriers exist to establishing a  
20 streamlined application process for grants under this  
21 section.

22 (2) REPORT.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days  
24 after the date of enactment of this Act, the At-  
25 torney General shall submit to Congress a re-

1 port that includes a plan to implement a  
2 streamlined application process for grants  
3 under this section under which an eligible entity  
4 seeking a grant under this section can reason-  
5 ably complete the application in not more than  
6 2 hours.

7 (B) CONTENTS OF PLAN.—The plan re-  
8 quired under subparagraph (A) may include a  
9 plan for—

10 (i) proactively providing eligible local  
11 governments seeking a grant under this  
12 section with information on the data such  
13 eligible local governments will need to pre-  
14 pare before beginning the grant applica-  
15 tion; and

16 (ii) ensuring technical assistance is  
17 available for eligible local governments  
18 seeking a grant under this section before  
19 and during the grant application process,  
20 including through dedicated liaisons within  
21 the Office of Community Oriented Policing  
22 Services.

23 (3) APPLICATIONS.—In selecting eligible local  
24 governments to receive grants under this section, the  
25 Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing

1 ing Services shall use the streamlined application  
2 process described in paragraph (2)(A).

3 (j) CONSULTATION.—The Attorney General shall de-  
4 velop criteria governing the award of grants under this  
5 section to ensure that the funds are distributed as widely  
6 as practicable in terms of geographical location and to  
7 both large and small law enforcement agencies.

8 (k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be  
10 appropriated to carry out this section \$60,000,000  
11 for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2031.

12 (2) PERCENT FOR CERTAIN ELIGIBLE ENTITIES  
13 OR PROJECTS.—

14 (A) TRIBAL ENTITIES.—The Attorney  
15 General shall use at least 5 percent of the  
16 amount made available under paragraph (1) for  
17 a fiscal year to award grants under the Pro-  
18 gram to Tribal law enforcement agencies or  
19 Tribal prosecuting offices, or groups of such  
20 agencies or offices.

21 (B) RURAL ENTITIES.—The Attorney Gen-  
22 eral shall use at least 5 percent of the amount  
23 made available under paragraph (1) for a fiscal  
24 year to award grants under the Program to law  
25 enforcement agencies classified as rural.