

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To provide technical assistance and grants for faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, and local governments to increase the supply of affordable rental housing, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WARNER (for himself, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, and Mr. KIM) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To provide technical assistance and grants for faith-based organizations, institutions of higher education, and local governments to increase the supply of affordable rental housing, 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 “Yes in God’s Backyard
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND GRANTS FOR FAITH-**
2 **BASED ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS OF**
3 **HIGHER EDUCATION, AND LOCAL GOVERN-**
4 **MENTS TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO AND IN-**
5 **CREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE RENT-**
6 **AL HOUSING.**

7 Title II of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable
8 Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12721 et seq.), is amended by
9 adding at the end the following:

10 **“Subtitle G—Technical Assistance**
11 **and Grants for Faith-based Or-**
12 **ganizations, Institutions of**
13 **Higher Education, and Local**
14 **Governments to Remove Bar-**
15 **riers and to Increase the Supply**
16 **of Affordable Rental Housing**

17 **“SEC. 290. DEFINITIONS.**

18 “In this subtitle:

19 “(1) **AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING.**—The
20 term ‘affordable rental housing’ means housing
21 available to the public charging a monthly rent that
22 is not more than 30 percent of household income of
23 a covered household.

24 “(2) **AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS.**—The term
25 ‘at risk of homelessness’ has the meaning given the

1 term in section 401 of the McKinney-Vento Home-
2 less Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360).

3 “(3) COVERED HOUSEHOLD.—The term ‘cov-
4 ered household’ means a household with income that
5 is at or below 100 percent of area median income as
6 defined by the Secretary.

7 “(4) EXTREMELY LOW-INCOME FAMILIES.—The
8 term ‘extremely low-income families’ has the mean-
9 ing given the term in section 3(b) of the United
10 States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a).

11 “(5) FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION.—The term
12 ‘faith-based organization’—

13 “(A) has the meaning given the term by
14 the Secretary; and

15 “(B) includes any organization assisted by
16 the Partnership Center.

17 “(6) HOMELESS.—The term ‘homeless’ has the
18 meaning given the term in section 103 of the
19 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
20 U.S.C. 11302).

21 “(7) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—
22 The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the
23 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
24 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

1 “(8) PARTNERSHIP CENTER.—The term ‘Part-
2 nership Center’ means the Center for Faith-Based
3 and Neighborhood Partnerships in the Office of the
4 Secretary or any successor office.

5 **“SEC. 291. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

6 “(a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall establish a pro-
7 gram to provide technical assistance to assist faith-based
8 organizations, institutions of higher education, and local
9 governments in order to remove barriers to the production
10 and preservation of affordable rental housing on property
11 owned by faith-based organizations and institutions of
12 higher education.

13 “(b) CONTENTS.—The program established under
14 subsection (a) shall consist of resources related to—

15 “(1) understanding how excess property owned
16 by faith-based organizations and institutions of high-
17 er education can be developed into affordable rental
18 housing and how existing affordable rental housing
19 can be preserved;

20 “(2) the development and preservation of af-
21 fordable rental housing on property owned by faith-
22 based organizations and institutions of higher edu-
23 cation, including—

24 “(A) housing for households at or below 60
25 percent of area median income;

1 “(B) housing for individuals and families
2 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, in-
3 cluding veterans;

4 “(C) accessible rental housing for individ-
5 uals with disabilities;

6 “(D) housing for intergenerational families
7 under section 203 of the LEGACY Act of 2003
8 (12 U.S.C. 1701q note);

9 “(E) housing for other special needs popu-
10 lations as determined by the Secretary; and

11 “(F) housing that would increase equitable
12 access to well-resourced areas of opportunity;

13 “(3) Federal assistance for affordable rental
14 housing production and preservation, including in-
15 formation on federally assisted rental housing pro-
16 grams, and services for residents;

17 “(4) best practices in the housing development
18 and preservation processes, including selection of de-
19 velopment, preservation, and management partners,
20 considerations regarding land lease, ownership, or
21 sale ensuring equitable access to housing, and other
22 considerations;

23 “(5) best practices for State and local govern-
24 ments to remove barriers to and encourage the pro-
25 duction of affordable rental housing, especially in

1 well-resourced areas of opportunity, on property
2 owned by faith-based organizations and institutions
3 of higher education; and

4 “(6) any other areas as determined by the Sec-
5 retary.

6 “(c) CONSULTATION.—In developing technical assist-
7 ance and other resources under this section, the Secretary
8 shall consult with the Partnership Center and other Fed-
9 eral agencies administering affordable housing and related
10 programs, including the Departments of Agriculture, the
11 Treasury, and Health and Human Services.

12 “(d) DISSEMINATION.—The resources described in
13 subsection (b) shall be made publicly available.

14 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
15 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

16 “(1) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and

17 “(2) \$10,000,000 each of fiscal years 2027
18 through 2031.

19 **“SEC. 292. CHALLENGE GRANTS TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO**
20 **AND INCREASE AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUS-**
21 **ING SUPPLY ON PROPERTY OWNED BY FAITH-**
22 **BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS**
23 **OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

24 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 “(1) ELIGIBLE GRANTEE.—The term ‘eligible
2 grantee’ means—

3 “(A) a unit of general local government;

4 “(B) a State;

5 “(C) a metropolitan planning organization;

6 and

7 “(D) a multi-jurisdiction entity, as defined
8 by the Secretary.

9 “(2) STATE; UNIT OF GENERAL LOCAL GOV-
10 ERNMENT.—The terms ‘State’ and ‘unit of general
11 local government’ have the meanings given those
12 terms in section 102 of the Housing and Community
13 Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5302).

14 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
15 lish a Challenge Grant program to make grants on a com-
16 petitive basis to eligible grantees that have policies in ef-
17 fect that are designed to remove barriers to the production
18 and preservation of affordable rental housing on property
19 owned by faith-based organizations and institutions of
20 higher education.

21 “(c) APPLICATION.—

22 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity desiring a
23 grant under this section shall submit to the Sec-
24 retary an application at such time, in such manner,

1 and containing such information as the Secretary
2 may require.

3 “(2) OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—In order to re-
4 ceive a grant under this section, an applicant shall—

5 “(A) demonstrate that the applicant has
6 policies in effect designed to remove barriers to
7 the production or preservation of affordable
8 housing on property owned by faith-based orga-
9 nizations and institutions of higher education,
10 as determined by the Secretary;

11 “(B) make publicly available a proposed
12 plan for use of a grant under this section and
13 solicit comments on the plan; and

14 “(C) address the disposition of public com-
15 ments described in subparagraph (B) in a final
16 plan submitted to the Secretary as part of the
17 grant application.

18 “(d) PREFERENCE.—In making awards under this
19 section, the Secretary shall give preference to applicants
20 that propose to use the grant to produce or preserve—

21 “(1) affordable rental housing for families with
22 incomes below 60 percent of area median income, as
23 determined by the Secretary in well-resourced areas
24 of opportunity;

1 “(2) affordable rental housing for extremely
2 low-income families;

3 “(3) affordable rental housing or non-con-
4 gregate emergency housing for individuals and fami-
5 lies who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, in-
6 cluding veterans;

7 “(4) affordable and accessible rental housing
8 for individuals with disabilities;

9 “(5) affordable rental housing for intergenera-
10 tional families under section 203 of the LEGACY
11 Act of 2003 (12 U.S.C. 1701q note); or

12 “(6) affordable rental housing for other special
13 needs populations as designated by the Secretary.

14 “(e) ALLOWABLE USES.—An eligible entity that re-
15 ceives a grant under this section shall use grant funds to
16 carry out 1 or more of the following activities pertaining
17 to the removal of barriers to and encouraging the produc-
18 tion and preservation of affordable rental housing on prop-
19 erty owned by faith-based organizations and institutions
20 of higher education:

21 “(1) Assessing and removing local policy and
22 procedural barriers to and adopting best practices to
23 encourage the development of affordable rental hous-
24 ing under this section.

1 “(2) Outreach to and technical assistance for
2 faith-based organizations, institutions of higher edu-
3 cation, and other community partners to facilitate
4 production and preservation of affordable rental
5 housing.

6 “(3) Making grants and loans to projects that
7 produce or preserve affordable rental housing under
8 this section.

9 “(4) Such other activities that will further the
10 purposes of this subtitle, as determined by the Sec-
11 retary.

12 “(f) REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION.—A grant-
13 ee under this section shall submit such information as the
14 Secretary may require in order to monitor, assist, and
15 evaluate the performance of the grantee and program
16 under this section.

17 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

18 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
19 appropriated to carry out this section \$50,000,000
20 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2031.

21 “(2) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Of the funds
22 authorized to be appropriated under paragraph (1),
23 not more than 10 percent may be used by the Sec-
24 retary for administering the grant program estab-
25 lished under this section.”.