

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 355

To protect law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 13, 2023

Mr. BACON (for himself, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. CARL, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. LATTA, Mr. BARR, Mr. AMODEI, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, and Mr. MEUSER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To protect law enforcement officers, 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 “Back the Blue Act
5 of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. PROTECTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.**

7 (a) KILLING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—

8 (1) OFFENSE.—Chapter 51 of title 18, United
9 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
10 following:

1 **“§ 1123. Killing of law enforcement officers**

2 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

3 “(1) the terms ‘Federal law enforcement officer’
4 and ‘United States judge’ have the meanings given
5 those terms in section 115;

6 “(2) the term ‘federally funded public safety of-
7 ficer’ means a public safety officer or judicial officer
8 for a public agency that—

9 “(A) receives Federal financial assistance;
10 and

11 “(B) is an agency of an entity that is a
12 State of the United States, the District of Co-
13 lumbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the
14 Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the
15 Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Is-
16 lands, or any territory or possession of the
17 United States, an Indian tribe, or a unit of
18 local government of that entity;

19 “(3) the term ‘firefighter’ includes an individual
20 serving as an official recognized or designated mem-
21 ber of a legally organized volunteer fire department
22 and an officially recognized or designated public em-
23 ployee member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew;

24 “(4) the term ‘judicial officer’ means a judge or
25 other officer or employee of a court, including pros-
26 ecutors, court security, pretrial services officers,

1 court reporters, and corrections, probation, and pa-
2 role officers;

3 “(5) the term ‘law enforcement officer’ means
4 an individual, with statutory arrest powers, involved
5 in crime or juvenile delinquency control or reduction
6 or enforcement of the laws;

7 “(6) the term ‘public agency’ includes a court
8 system, the National Guard of a State to the extent
9 the personnel of that National Guard are not in
10 Federal service, and the defense forces of a State
11 authorized by section 109 of title 32; and

12 “(7) the term ‘public safety officer’ means an
13 individual serving a public agency in an official ca-
14 pacity, as a law enforcement officer, as a firefighter,
15 as a chaplain, or as a member of a rescue squad or
16 ambulance crew.

17 “(b) OFFENSE.—It shall be unlawful for any person
18 to—

19 “(1) kill, or attempt or conspire to kill—

20 “(A) a United States judge;

21 “(B) a Federal law enforcement officer; or

22 “(C) a federally funded public safety offi-
23 cer while that officer is engaged in official du-
24 ties, or on account of the performance of offi-
25 cial duties; or

1 “(2) kill a former United States judge, Federal
2 law enforcement officer, or federally funded public
3 safety officer on account of the past performance of
4 official duties.

5 “(c) PENALTY.—Any person that violates subsection
6 (b) shall be fined under this title and imprisoned for not
7 less than 10 years or for life, or, if death results, shall
8 be sentenced to not less than 30 years and not more than
9 life, or may be punished by death.”.

10 (2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections
11 for chapter 51 of title 18, United States Code, is
12 amended by adding at the end the following:

“1123. Killing of law enforcement officers.”.

13 (b) ASSAULT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—

14 (1) OFFENSE.—Chapter 7 of title 18, United
15 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
16 following:

17 **“§ 120. Assaults of law enforcement officers**

18 “(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ‘feder-
19 ally funded State or local law enforcement officer’ means
20 an individual involved in crime and juvenile delinquency
21 control or reduction, or enforcement of the laws (including
22 a police, corrections, probation, or parole officer) who
23 works for a public agency (that receives Federal financial
24 assistance) of a State of the United States or the District
25 of Columbia.

1 “(b) OFFENSE.—It shall be unlawful to assault a fed-
2 erally funded State or local law enforcement officer while
3 engaged in or on account of the performance of official
4 duties, or assaults any person who formerly served as a
5 federally funded State or local law enforcement officer on
6 account of the performance of such person’s official duties
7 during such service, or because of the actual or perceived
8 status of the person as a federally funded State or local
9 law enforcement officer.

10 “(c) PENALTY.—Any person that violates subsection
11 (b) shall be subject to a fine under this title and—

12 “(1) if the assault resulted in bodily injury (as
13 defined in section 1365), shall be imprisoned not less
14 than 2 years and not more than 10 years;

15 “(2) if the assault resulted in substantial bodily
16 injury (as defined in section 113), shall be impris-
17 oned not less than 5 years and not more than 20
18 years;

19 “(3) if the assault resulted in serious bodily in-
20 jury (as defined in section 1365), shall be impris-
21 oned for not less than 10 years;

22 “(4) if a deadly or dangerous weapon was used
23 during and in relation to the assault, shall be im-
24 prisoned for not less than 20 years; and

1 “(5) shall be imprisoned for not more than 1
2 year in any other case.

3 “(d) CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—No prosecution of any of-
5 fense described in this section may be undertaken by
6 the United States, except under the certification in
7 writing of the Attorney General, or a designee,
8 that—

9 “(A) the State does not have jurisdiction;

10 “(B) the State has requested that the Fed-
11 eral Government assume jurisdiction;

12 “(C) the verdict or sentence obtained pur-
13 suant to State charges left demonstratively
14 unvindicated the Federal interest in eradicating
15 bias-motivated violence; or

16 “(D) a prosecution by the United States is
17 in the public interest and necessary to secure
18 substantial justice.

19 “(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
20 this subsection shall be construed to limit the au-
21 thority of Federal officers, or a Federal grand jury,
22 to investigate possible violations of this section.

23 “(e) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—

24 “(1) OFFENSES NOT RESULTING IN DEATH.—

25 Except as provided in paragraph (2), no person shall

1 be prosecuted, tried, or punished for any offense
 2 under this section unless the indictment for such of-
 3 fense is found, or the information for such offense
 4 is instituted, not later than 7 years after the date
 5 on which the offense was committed.

6 “(2) OFFENSES RESULTING IN DEATH.—An in-
 7 dictment or information alleging that an offense
 8 under this section resulted in death may be found or
 9 instituted at any time without limitation.”.

10 (2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections
 11 for chapter 7 of title 18, United States Code, is
 12 amended by adding at the end the following:

“120. Assaults of law enforcement officers.”.

13 (c) FLIGHT TO AVOID PROSECUTION FOR KILLING
 14 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS.—

15 (1) OFFENSE.—Chapter 49 of title 18, United
 16 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the
 17 following:

18 “§ 1075. **Flight to avoid prosecution for killing law**
 19 **enforcement officials**

20 “(a) OFFENSE.—It shall be unlawful for any person
 21 to move or travel in interstate or foreign commerce with
 22 intent to avoid prosecution, or custody or confinement
 23 after conviction, under the laws of the place from which
 24 the person flees or under section 1114 or 1123, for a crime
 25 consisting of the killing, an attempted killing, or a con-

1 spiracy to kill a Federal judge or Federal law enforcement
 2 officer (as those terms are defined in section 115), or a
 3 federally funded public safety officer (as that term is de-
 4 fined in section 1123).

5 “(b) PENALTY.—Any person that violates subsection
 6 (a) shall be fined under this title and imprisoned for not
 7 less than 10 years, in addition to any other term of impris-
 8 onment for any other offense relating to the conduct de-
 9 scribed in subsection (a).”.

10 (2) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections
 11 for chapter 49 of title 18, United States Code, is
 12 amended by adding at the end the following:

“1075. Flight to avoid prosecution for killing law enforcement officials.”.

13 **SEC. 3. SPECIFIC AGGRAVATING FACTOR FOR FEDERAL**
 14 **DEATH PENALTY KILLING OF LAW ENFORCE-**
 15 **MENT OFFICER.**

16 (a) AGGRAVATING FACTORS FOR HOMICIDE.—Sec-
 17 tion 3592(e) of title 18, United States Code, is amended
 18 by inserting after paragraph (16) the following:

19 “(17) KILLING OF A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFI-
 20 CER, PROSECUTOR, JUDGE, OR FIRST RESPONDER.—
 21 The defendant killed or attempted to kill a person
 22 who is authorized by law—

23 “(A) to engage in or supervise the preven-
 24 tion, detention, or investigation of any criminal
 25 violation of law;

1 “(B) to arrest, prosecute, or adjudicate an
2 individual for any criminal violation of law; or

3 “(C) to be a firefighter or other first re-
4 sponder.”.

5 **SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON FEDERAL HABEAS RELIEF FOR**
6 **MURDERS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.**

7 (a) **JUSTICE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS**
8 **AND THEIR FAMILIES.—**

9 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 2254 of title 28,
10 United States Code, is amended by adding at the
11 end the following:

12 “(j)(1) For an application for a writ of habeas corpus
13 on behalf of a person in custody pursuant to the judgment
14 of a State court for a crime that involved the killing of
15 a public safety officer (as that term is defined in section
16 1204 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe
17 Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796b)) or judge, while
18 the public safety officer or judge was engaged in the per-
19 formance of official duties, or on account of the perform-
20 ance of official duties by or status as a public safety officer
21 or judge of the public safety officer or judge—

22 “(A) the application shall be subject to the time
23 limitations and other requirements under sections
24 2263, 2264, and 2266; and

1 “(B) the court shall not consider claims relating
2 to sentencing that were adjudicated in a State court.

3 “(2) Sections 2251, 2262, and 2101 are the exclusive
4 sources of authority for Federal courts to stay a sentence
5 of death entered by a State court in a case described in
6 paragraph (1).”.

7 (2) RULES.—Rule 11 of the Rules Governing
8 Section 2254 Cases in the United States District
9 Courts is amended by adding at the end the fol-
10 lowing: “Rule 60(b)(6) of the Federal Rules of Civil
11 Procedure shall not apply to a proceeding under
12 these rules in a case that is described in section
13 2254(j) of title 28, United States Code.”.

14 (3) FINALITY OF DETERMINATION.—Section
15 2244(b)(3)(E) of title 28, United States Code, is
16 amended by striking “the subject of a petition” and
17 all that follows and inserting: “reheard in the court
18 of appeals or reviewed by writ of certiorari.”.

19 (4) EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICABILITY.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—This paragraph and the
21 amendments made by this paragraph shall
22 apply to any case pending on or after the date
23 of enactment of this Act.

24 (B) TIME LIMITS.—In a case pending on
25 the date of enactment of this Act, if the amend-

1 ments made by this paragraph impose a time
2 limit for taking certain action, the period of
3 which began before the date of enactment of
4 this Act, the period of such time limit shall
5 begin on the date of enactment of this Act.

6 (C) EXCEPTION.—The amendments made
7 by this paragraph shall not bar consideration
8 under section 2266(b)(3)(B) of title 28, United
9 States Code, of an amendment to an application
10 for a writ of habeas corpus that is pending on
11 the date of enactment of this Act, if the amend-
12 ment to the petition was adjudicated by the
13 court prior to the date of enactment of this Act.

14 **SEC. 5. SELF-DEFENSE RIGHTS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT**
15 **OFFICERS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 203 of title 18, United
17 States Code, is amended by inserting after section 3053
18 the following:

19 **“§ 3054. Authority of law enforcement officers to**
20 **carry firearms**

21 “Any sworn officer, agent, or employee of the United
22 States, a State, or a political subdivision thereof, who is
23 authorized by law to engage in or supervise the prevention,
24 detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of
25 law, or to supervise or secure the safety of incarcerated

1 inmates, may carry firearms if authorized by law to do
2 so. Such authority to carry firearms, with respect to the
3 lawful performance of the official duties of a sworn officer,
4 agent, or employee of a State or a political subdivision
5 thereof, shall include possession incident to depositing a
6 firearm within a secure firearms storage area for use by
7 all persons who are authorized to carry a firearm within
8 any building or structure classified as a Federal facility
9 or Federal court facility, as those terms are defined under
10 section 930, and any grounds appurtenant to such a facil-
11 ity.”.

12 (b) CARRYING OF CONCEALED FIREARMS BY QUALI-
13 FIED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—Section
14 926B(e)(2) of title 18, United States Code, is amended
15 by inserting “any magazine and” after “includes”.

16 (c) CARRYING OF CONCEALED FIREARMS BY QUALI-
17 FIED RETIRED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—Section
18 926C(e)(1)(B) of title 18, United States Code, is amended
19 by inserting “any magazine and” after “includes”.

20 (d) SCHOOL ZONES.—Section 922(q)(2)(B)(vi) of
21 title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting “or
22 a qualified law enforcement officer (as defined in section
23 926B(c))” before the semicolon.

24 (e) REGULATIONS REQUIRED.—Not later than 60
25 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney

1 General shall promulgate regulations allowing persons de-
2 scribed in section 3054 of title 18, United States Code,
3 to possess firearms in a manner described by that section.
4 With respect to Federal justices, judges, bankruptcy
5 judges, and magistrate judges, such regulations shall be
6 prescribed after consultation with the Judicial Conference
7 of the United States.

8 (f) TABLE OF SECTIONS.—The table of sections for
9 chapter 203 of title 18, United States Code, is amended
10 by inserting after the item relating to section 3053 the
11 following:

“3054. Authority of law enforcement officers to carry firearms.”.

12 (g) FURTHER AMENDMENT.—Section 930 of title 18,
13 United States Code, is amended—

14 (1) in subsection (d)—

15 (A) in paragraph (2), by striking “or” at
16 the end;

17 (B) in paragraph (3), by striking the pe-
18 riod at the end and inserting “or”; and

19 (C) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(4) the possession of a firearm or ammunition
21 in a Facility Security Level I or II civilian public ac-
22 cess facility by a qualified law enforcement officer
23 (as defined in section 926B(e)) or a qualified retired
24 law enforcement officer (as defined in section
25 926C(e)).”; and

1 (2) in subsection (g), by adding at the end the
2 following:

3 “(4) The term ‘Facility Security Level’ means
4 a security risk assessment level assigned to a Fed-
5 eral facility by the security agency of the facility in
6 accordance with the biannually issued Interagency
7 Security Committee Standard.

8 “(5) The term ‘civilian public access facility’
9 means a facility open to the general public.”.

10 **SEC. 6. IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW EN-**
11 **FORCEMENT AGENCIES AND THE COMMU-**
12 **NITIES THEY SERVE.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—For each of fiscal years 2024
14 through 2028, the Attorney General using covered
15 amounts shall, using such amounts as are necessary not
16 to exceed \$20,000,000, award grants to State, local, or
17 tribal law enforcement agencies and appropriate non-
18 governmental organizations to—

19 (1) promote trust and ensure legitimacy among
20 law enforcement agencies and the communities they
21 serve through procedural reforms, transparency, and
22 accountability;

23 (2) develop comprehensive and responsive poli-
24 cies on key topics relevant to the relationship be-

1 tween law enforcement agencies and the commu-
2 nities they serve;

3 (3) balance the embrace of technology and dig-
4 ital communications with local needs, privacy, as-
5 sessments, and monitoring;

6 (4) encourage the implementation of policies
7 that support community-based partnerships in the
8 reduction of crime;

9 (5) emphasize the importance of high quality
10 and effective training and education through part-
11 nerships with local and national training facilities;
12 and

13 (6) endorse practices that support officer
14 wellness and safety through the re-evaluation of offi-
15 cer shift hours, including data collection and anal-
16 ysis.

17 (b) COVERED AMOUNTS DEFINED.—In this section,
18 the term “covered amounts” means—

19 (1) any unobligated balances made available
20 under the heading “GENERAL ADMINISTRA-
21 TION” under the heading “DEPARTMENT OF
22 JUSTICE” in an appropriations Act in a fiscal year;

23 (2) any amounts made available for an “Ed-
24 ward Byrne Memorial criminal justice innovation
25 program” under the heading “STATE AND LOCAL

1 LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE” under the heading
2 “OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS” under the
3 heading “DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE” in an ap-
4 propriations Act in a fiscal year; or
5 (3) any combination of amounts described in
6 paragraphs (1) and (2).

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