

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7459

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue a strategy to improve hiring and retention of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel in rural or remote areas, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 7, 2022

Mr. GOLDEN (for himself and Mr. PFLUGER) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue a strategy to improve hiring and retention of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel in rural or remote areas, 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 “DHS Rural and Re-
5 mote Hiring and Retention Strategy Act of 2022”.

1 **SEC. 2. STRATEGY.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
3 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Home-
4 land Security, acting through the Chief Human Capital
5 Officer of the Department of Homeland Security, the
6 Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection,
7 and the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs En-
8 forcement, shall issue a strategy and implementation plan,
9 including benchmarks, to improve the hiring and retention
10 of individuals by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and
11 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in rural or
12 remote areas relating to employment in such areas.

13 (b) CONSIDERATIONS.—The strategy required under
14 subsection (a) shall take into consideration the following:

15 (1) Feedback from individuals who are U.S.
16 Customs and Border Protection or U.S. Immigration
17 and Customs Enforcement candidates or new hires
18 at locations in rural or remote areas, including feed-
19 back on the quality of life in such areas for new
20 hires and their families.

21 (2) Feedback from U.S. Customs and Border
22 Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs En-
23 forcement personnel, other than new hires, who are
24 stationed at locations in rural or remote areas, in-
25 cluding feedback on the quality of life in such areas
26 for such personnel and their families.

1 (3) Feedback from U.S. Customs and Border
2 Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs En-
3 forcement personnel who have decided to separate
4 from U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S.
5 Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as the case
6 may be.

7 (4) An assessment of existing Federal pro-
8 grams, including financial incentives and other com-
9 pensation-based flexibilities, regarding how to most
10 effectively aid spouses and families of individuals
11 who are candidates or new hires in a rural or remote
12 area.

13 (5) An assessment of Department of Homeland
14 Security internship programs and the usefulness of
15 such programs in improving hiring by the Secretary
16 of Homeland Security in rural or remote areas.

17 (c) PLAN.—The implementation plan required under
18 subsection (a) shall—

19 (1) include a pilot or other program, as appro-
20 priate, to address hiring and retention challenges
21 faced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and
22 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in
23 rural or remote areas; and

24 (2) enhance strategic recruiting efforts of U.S.
25 Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigra-

1 tion and Customs Enforcement through relation-
2 ships with institutions of higher education (as such
3 term is defined in section 102 of the Higher Edu-
4 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)), veterans
5 transition and employment centers, and job place-
6 ment programs in regions that could assist in filling
7 positions in rural or remote areas.

8 (d) REPORT TO CONGRESS AND GAO.—Beginning on
9 the date that is one year after the date of issuance of the
10 strategy and implementation plan required under sub-
11 section (a) and for four years thereafter, the Secretary of
12 Homeland Security shall report to the Committee on
13 Homeland Security of the House of Representatives, the
14 Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Af-
15 fairs of the Senate, and the Comptroller General of the
16 United States on the extent to which such strategy and
17 implementation plan has improved the hiring and reten-
18 tion by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Im-
19 migration and Customs Enforcement of employees in rural
20 or remote areas.

21 (e) GAO ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 120 days
22 after receiving each report required under subsection (d),
23 the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit
24 to the committees referred to in such subsection an assess-
25 ment of the effectiveness of U.S. Customs and Border

1 Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforce-
2 ment actions described in each such report, including rec-
3 ommendations for improvements as the Comptroller Gen-
4 eral determines appropriate.

5 (f) RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS DEFINED.—For pur-
6 poses of this section, the term “rural or remote areas”
7 means areas within the United States that are not within
8 an area defined and designated as urbanized areas by the
9 Bureau of the Census in the most recently completed de-
10 cennial census, and includes areas along the northern and
11 southern borders.

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