

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7710

To establish the National Counter Human Trafficking Research and Development Initiative, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 10, 2022

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin (for herself, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, and Mr. BEYER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Small Business, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish the National Counter Human Trafficking Research and Development Initiative, 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 “Counter Human Traf-
5 ficking Research and Development Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Trafficking in persons is a multi-billion dol-
2 lar transnational illicit enterprise.

3 (2) Globally, millions of people, including chil-
4 dren, are trafficked each year through sexual exploi-
5 tation or forced labor.

6 (3) Human trafficking impacts every country
7 around the world, including the United States,
8 whether as the country of origin, transit, or destina-
9 tion, or combination of all three.

10 (4) Science and technology have important roles
11 to play in combatting human trafficking. The 2019
12 United Nations Interagency Coordination Group
13 Against Trafficking in Persons report states that
14 technology can help practitioners combat trafficking,
15 such as by aiding investigations, enhancing prosecu-
16 tions, raising awareness, providing service to victims,
17 and shedding light on the make-up and operation of
18 trafficking networks.

19 (5) Limited data sources and data fragmenta-
20 tion are major barriers to anti-trafficking efforts,
21 both domestically and globally, and has limited the
22 ability to carry out rigorous study of human traf-
23 ficking.

24 (6) Key areas of need for research and tech-
25 nology development to counter human trafficking are

1 measuring the prevalence of trafficking, identifying
2 effective mechanisms for disrupting human traf-
3 ficking networks, establishing metrics of success for
4 ongoing efforts to combat trafficking, understanding
5 long and short-term needs of victims and survivors,
6 vulnerability reduction, trafficking prevention and
7 demand reduction, understanding how legitimate
8 businesses may enable human trafficking, under-
9 standing all forms of trafficking, including labor
10 trafficking, the nature and characteristics of victims
11 of human trafficking in the United States, under-
12 standing illicit activities and corruption associated
13 with human trafficking, and evaluating the efficacy
14 and impact of anti-trafficking interventions.

15 (7) To improve efforts to counter human traf-
16 ficking, the Federal Government must address major
17 barriers to human trafficking research and tech-
18 nology development by improving and increasing co-
19 ordination of research efforts and information shar-
20 ing among researchers, Federal agencies, law en-
21 forcement, local, State, and Tribal governments, pri-
22 vate sector, survivors and survivor organizations,
23 policymakers, international partners, and other
24 stakeholder communities.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITION.**

2 In this Act, the term “trafficking” has the meaning
3 given the term “severe forms of trafficking in persons”
4 in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act
5 of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

6 **SEC. 4. COUNTER HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESEARCH AND**
7 **DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President, acting through the
9 Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy,
10 shall establish a National Counter Human Trafficking Re-
11 search and Development Initiative to improve counter
12 human trafficking efforts through—

13 (1) supporting interdisciplinary research in
14 data, computational, and information sciences, engi-
15 neering and social and behavioral sciences to accel-
16 erate scientific understanding and technological in-
17 novation that contributes to the prevention, identi-
18 fication, and disruption of human trafficking within
19 and across communities, including urban, rural, and
20 indigenous and tribal communities, including—

21 (A) research and development on tools for
22 measuring the prevalence of human trafficking;

23 (B) design, development, implementation,
24 adaptation, and evaluation of human trafficking
25 interventions;

1 (C) research to detect and disrupt human
2 trafficking demand;

3 (D) research to increase understanding of
4 social, financial, and physical networks used in
5 human trafficking; and

6 (E) research and standards development to
7 detect and disrupt cyber-enabled human traf-
8 ficking;

9 (2) accelerating the development, demonstra-
10 tion, and translation of technology that contributes
11 to the prevention, identification, and disruption of
12 human trafficking, including by informing anti-traf-
13 ficking policymaking;

14 (3) leveraging existing research programs and
15 activities, as appropriate, on cybersecurity, privacy
16 enhancing technologies, biometrics, digital identity
17 management, digital forensics, data and metadata
18 analytics tools, processes, and techniques to prevent,
19 identify and disrupt human trafficking, including
20 improving the taxonomy of digital trafficking indica-
21 tors and signatures;

22 (4) improving Federal agency coordination of
23 research and development activities to counter
24 human trafficking;

1 (5) improving the sharing of human trafficking
2 data and information among Federal agencies and
3 between public and private entities, while protecting
4 victim and survivor privacy and safety, including by
5 promoting trauma-informed approaches to data col-
6 lection and sharing;

7 (6) leveraging technology development across
8 the Federal Government to counter human traf-
9 ficking;

10 (7) coordinating and collaborating, to the extent
11 practicable and as appropriate, with similar inter-
12 national efforts and organizations to share data, re-
13 search, breakthroughs, and best practices;

14 (8) facilitating public-private partnerships be-
15 tween Federal agencies, State, local and tribal gov-
16 ernments, academia, law enforcement, financial in-
17 stitutions, private sector, telecommunications and
18 internet platform providers, nonprofit organizations,
19 nongovernmental organizations, human trafficking
20 victims' and survivors' services organizations, and
21 international anti-trafficking organizations to im-
22 prove human trafficking research;

23 (9) supporting research and development in-
24 formed by human trafficking survivors; and

1 (10) identifying unintended negative con-
2 sequences of technology and policy implementation
3 on human trafficking networks, operations, and sur-
4 vivors.

5 (b) INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES.—The activities of the
6 Initiative shall include—

7 (1) sustained support for anti-trafficking re-
8 lated research and development, which may in-
9 clude—

10 (A) grants to fund the work of individual
11 researchers and teams of researchers, including
12 interdisciplinary teams;

13 (B) projects funded under joint solicita-
14 tions by a collaboration of no fewer than two
15 agencies participating in the Initiative; and

16 (C) interdisciplinary research centers orga-
17 nized to investigate basic and applied research
18 questions, carry out technology prototyping, de-
19 velopment and demonstration activities, scale up
20 anti-trafficking research and development, test-
21 ing, and evaluation;

22 (2) sustained support for databases and related
23 tools to enhance scientific research and technology
24 development, including—

1 (A) support for the establishment,
2 curation, and maintenance of databases of vul-
3 nerability indicators, trafficking indicators, and
4 other related information, with consideration of
5 data security and privacy in facilitating access
6 to these databases;

7 (B) development of standards for data
8 sharing and curation, including interoperability,
9 metadata, and protection of privacy, confiden-
10 tiality, and security;

11 (C) support for the development of privacy
12 preserving tools and techniques to enable com-
13 putation or analysis of trafficking indicators
14 while maintaining privacy and confidentiality of
15 that data; and

16 (D) support for the development of com-
17 putational tools, including natural language
18 processing, computer vision, and social network
19 analysis for the enrichment of data;

20 (3) supporting activities to accelerate the trans-
21 lation and implementation of new products, proc-
22 esses, and technologies by—

23 (A) identifying precompetitive research op-
24 portunities with potential for commercialization
25 or adoption by government agencies;

1 (B) facilitating public-private partnerships
2 in anti-trafficking related research and develop-
3 ment;

4 (C) connecting researchers, graduate stu-
5 dents, and postdoctoral fellows with entrepre-
6 neurship education and training opportunities;

7 (D) supporting proof of concept activities
8 and formation of startup companies including
9 through programs such as the Small Business
10 Innovation Research Program and the Small
11 Business Technology Transfer Program as de-
12 scribed in section 9 of the Small Business Act
13 (15 U.S.C. 638); and

14 (E) pursuant section 24 of the Stevenson-
15 Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15
16 U.S.C. 3719), consider sponsorship of a prize
17 competition; and

18 (4) supporting research and development activi-
19 ties to support public outreach and dissemination of
20 best practices, tools, and information to prevent,
21 identify, and combat trafficking, including supply
22 chain transparency, business procurement, and other
23 activities.

1 **SEC. 5. INITIATIVE COORDINATION.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President, acting through the
3 Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy,
4 shall establish or designate an interagency committee,
5 which shall be co-chaired by the National Science Founda-
6 tion, and include representatives from any other Federal
7 agency the President considers appropriate (in this section
8 referred to as the “Interagency Committee”). The Inter-
9 agency Committee shall—

10 (1) oversee the planning, management, and co-
11 ordination of the Initiative;

12 (2) establish and periodically update the goals
13 and priorities of the Initiative;

14 (3) develop, not later than 12 months after the
15 date of enactment of this Act, and update every 5
16 years thereafter, a strategic plan submitted to the
17 Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the
18 House of Representatives and the Committee on
19 Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Sen-
20 ate that—

21 (A) guides the activities of the Initiative
22 for purposes of meeting the goals and priorities
23 established under and updated pursuant to
24 paragraph (3);

1 (B) establishes milestones and associated
2 activities that reach those milestones in pursuit
3 of achieving the goals of the Initiative;

4 (C) describe how the Initiative will meas-
5 ure progress toward the established milestones;
6 and

7 (D) describes—

8 (i) the Initiative’s support for long-
9 term funding of research and development
10 related to countering human trafficking;

11 (ii) the Initiative’s support for inter-
12 agency research and public-private partner-
13 ships;

14 (iii) how the Initiative will contribute
15 to translating research and development
16 results from the lab to victim and survivor
17 organizations, law enforcement, investiga-
18 tors, and prosecutors;

19 (iv) the Initiative’s support for victim
20 and survivor-centric privacy, confiden-
21 tiality, and security considerations;

22 (v) the Initiative’s support for inclu-
23 sive research of diverse populations, includ-
24 ing girls and women of color, homeless in-
25 dividuals, LGBTQIA+ youth, Indigenous

1 People, migrant workers, and other groups;
2 and

3 (vi) develops a plan to utilize Federal
4 programs, such as Small Business Innova-
5 tion Research Program and the Small
6 Business Technology Transfer Program as
7 described in section 9 of the Small Busi-
8 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 638), in support of ac-
9 tivities described in section 4(b)(3);

10 (4) in carrying out this section, take into con-
11 sideration the recommendations by the advisory
12 committee established in section 6 and input from
13 other expert stakeholders; and

14 (5) coordinate with the Interagency Task Force
15 to Monitor and Combat Trafficking established pur-
16 suant to section 105 of the Trafficking Victims Pro-
17 tection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103).

18 (b) BIENNIAL REPORT.—Beginning with fiscal year
19 2024 and ending in fiscal year 2028, not later than 90
20 days after submission of the President’s annual budget re-
21 quest and every second fiscal year thereafter, the Inter-
22 agency Committee shall prepare and submit to the Com-
23 mittee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House
24 of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce,
25 Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that

1 includes a summarized agency budget in support of the
2 Initiative for the fiscal year to which the budget applies
3 and the following fiscal year, including a breakout of
4 spending for each agency participating in the Program.

5 **SEC. 6. ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
7 date of enactment of this Act, the National Science Foun-
8 dation shall, in consultation with the Office of Science and
9 Technology Policy, establish an advisory committee on
10 counter human trafficking research and development (re-
11 ferred to in this section as the “advisory committee”).

12 (b) COMPOSITION.—The advisory committee estab-
13 lished pursuant subsection (a) shall be composed of not
14 fewer than 12 members, including representatives of re-
15 search institutions, institutions of higher education, law
16 enforcement, financial institutions, payment processors,
17 private sector, nonprofit organizations, survivors of human
18 trafficking, including at least one survivor of labor traf-
19 ficking and one survivor of sex trafficking, and victims’
20 and survivors’ services organizations who are qualified to
21 provide advice to the Initiative.

22 (c) DUTIES.—The advisory committee established
23 under subsection (a) shall assess—

24 (1) the coordination, implementation, and ac-
25 tivities of the Initiative;

1 (2) the balance of activities and funding across
2 the Initiative; and

3 (3) the need to revise the Program.

4 **SEC. 7. GAO REVIEW.**

5 (a) STUDY.—Not later than 90 days after the date
6 of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the
7 United States shall conduct a study that includes an as-
8 sessment of human trafficking data collection needs and
9 practices of Federal agencies, local nongovernmental orga-
10 nizations, law enforcement, and prosecutors to improve
11 Federal research and development to prevent, identify,
12 and disrupt human trafficking.

13 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the
14 date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General
15 of the United States shall submit a report on the findings
16 of the study conducted under subsection (a) to the Com-
17 mittee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House
18 of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce,
19 Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

20 **SEC. 8. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National
22 Science Foundation shall continue to award grants on a
23 competitive, merit-reviewed basis to institutions of higher
24 education or nonprofit organizations (or a consortia there-
25 of) to support anti-trafficking related research and devel-

1 opment that contributes to the prevention, identification,
2 and disruption of human trafficking.

3 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
4 are authorized to be appropriated to the National Science
5 Foundation to carry out subsection (a)—

6 (1) \$2,600,000 for fiscal year 2023;

7 (2) \$3,200,000 for fiscal year 2024;

8 (3) \$3,800,000 for fiscal year 2025;

9 (4) \$4,400,000 for fiscal year 2026; and

10 (5) \$5,200,000 for fiscal year 2027.

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