

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 2334

To require each public housing agency to establish and maintain an online portal for tenants and applicants, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 18, 2023

Mrs. GILLIBRAND introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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## A BILL

To require each public housing agency to establish and maintain an online portal for tenants and applicants, 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 “Housing Transparency  
5 Improvement Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) COVERED HOUSING.—The term “covered  
9 housing” means—

10 (A) low-income housing; and

1 (B) any property with assistance converted  
2 under the Rental Assistance Demonstration  
3 program authorized under title II of the Con-  
4 solidated and Further Continuing Appropria-  
5 tions Act, 2012 (Public Law 112–55; 125 Stat.  
6 673).

7 (2) FAMILIES; LOW-INCOME HOUSING.—The  
8 terms “families” and “low-income housing” have the  
9 meanings given those terms in section 3(b) of the  
10 United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C.  
11 1437a(b)).

12 (3) PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY.—The term  
13 “public housing agency”—

14 (A) has the meaning given the term in sec-  
15 tion 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of  
16 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)); and

17 (B) includes any owner of low-income  
18 housing that enters into a housing assistance  
19 payments contract under section 8 of the  
20 United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C.  
21 1437o).

22 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
23 the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

1           (5) SMALL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY.—The  
2 term “small public housing agency” means a public  
3 housing agency that—

4           (A) owns, assists, or operates not more  
5 than 250 covered housing dwelling units; and

6           (B) predominantly operates in a rural  
7 area, as described in section  
8 1026.35(b)(2)(iv)(A) of title 12, Code of Fed-  
9 eral Regulations, or any successor regulation.

10 **SEC. 3. ONLINE PORTAL.**

11       (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after  
12 the date of enactment of this Act, each public housing  
13 agency shall establish and maintain an online portal on  
14 the website of the public housing agency through which  
15 families residing in and applicants for a covered housing  
16 dwelling owned, assisted, or operated by the public hous-  
17 ing agency may—

18           (1) access information, including contact infor-  
19 mation, relating to the performance evaluation, man-  
20 agement, and control of the covered housing dwell-  
21 ing;

22           (2) access a plain language list of the legal  
23 rights of each family residing in or applying for the  
24 covered housing dwelling, which shall be available for  
25 translation; and

1           (3) track service requests and complaints sub-  
2           mitted to the public housing agency through a track-  
3           ing system described in subsection (b).

4           (b) TRACKING SYSTEM.—

5           (1) IN GENERAL.—Each public housing agency  
6           shall establish, using existing software or through  
7           new software, a request tracking system, including  
8           for inquiry on the status of an application, short-  
9           term and long-term capital improvements, service re-  
10          quests, and complaints, submitted by a family resid-  
11          ing in a covered housing dwelling owned or operated  
12          by the public housing agency through which the  
13          families and applicants may track requests with real-  
14          time updates provided by the public housing agency.

15          (2) SERVICE REQUEST AND COMPLAINT DATA-  
16          BASE.—

17                (A) ASSIGNMENT OF NUMBER.—The  
18                tracking system described in paragraph (1)  
19                shall contain a database under which the public  
20                housing agency shall assign each family residing  
21                in a covered housing dwelling owned or oper-  
22                ated by the public housing agency and each ap-  
23                plicant for a covered housing dwelling owned or  
24                operated by the public housing agency a ticket  
25                number or a private access number to use to

1           make requests or complaints described in para-  
2           graph (1).

3           (B) REQUIRED INFORMATION.—Each in-  
4           quiry described in subparagraph (A) shall—

5                   (i) be searchable through the tracking  
6                   system described in paragraph (1);

7                   (ii) have associated with it a descrip-  
8                   tion of—

9                           (I) the nature of the inquiry,  
10                          complaint, or request;

11                           (II) the most recent status of the  
12                          inquiry, complaint, or request;

13                           (III) whether or not the inquiry,  
14                          complaint, or request is open or  
15                          closed;

16                           (IV) any action taken on the in-  
17                          quiry, complaint, or request, and any  
18                          next steps to be taken; and

19                           (V) any additional information as  
20                          the public housing agency determines  
21                          appropriate; and

22                   (iii) not publicly disclose any personal  
23                   information relating to the inquiry, com-  
24                   plaint, or request, including the unit num-  
25                   ber, name of the resident or applicant, or

1           any other identifying information that is  
2           prohibited from disclosure under applicable  
3           laws.

4           (3) PROHIBITION.—A public housing agency  
5           may not require a family residing in a covered hous-  
6           ing dwelling owned or operated by the public hous-  
7           ing agency to use the tracking system described in  
8           paragraph (1) to submit requests or to receive up-  
9           dates relating to service requests and complaints  
10          submitted by the family.

11          (c) UPDATES.—Each public housing agency shall en-  
12          sure that the online portal established under subsection  
13          (a) is updated on a regular basis and contains the most  
14          recent information regarding inquiries, service requests,  
15          and complaints described in subsection (a)(3).

16          (d) REPORTING.—Each public housing agency shall,  
17          on an annual basis, develop a fact sheet for tenants resid-  
18          ing in and applicants for a covered housing dwelling  
19          owned, assisted, or operated by the public housing agency  
20          that—

21                  (1) includes, in a clear and easily discernible  
22          manner—

23                          (A) the total amount and type of Federal,  
24                          State, and local funds received for the fiscal  
25                          year;

1 (B) the funding streams for ongoing and  
2 upcoming capital improvement projects;

3 (C) the most recent inspection date and  
4 score;

5 (D) any major renovation, capital, or rede-  
6 velopment plans; and

7 (E) the name and contact information for  
8 the manager or management of the dwelling, if  
9 operating independently;

10 (2) is posted on the website of the public hous-  
11 ing agency, if applicable, is available in paper for-  
12 mat, is available for translation, is available upon re-  
13 quest, and is submitted as an addendum as part of  
14 the public housing agency plan provided to the Resi-  
15 dent Advisory Board and provided at a public hear-  
16 ing as required under section 5A of the United  
17 States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437e-1).

18 (e) GRANTS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make  
20 grants to public housing agencies in the amount nec-  
21 essary for the public housing agency to purchase, es-  
22 tablish, and maintain the online portal required  
23 under this section.

1           (2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

2           There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as  
3           may be necessary to carry out this subsection.

4           (f) REPORTING.—Each public housing agency shall,  
5           on an annual basis, submit to the Secretary information  
6           on grants made under subsection (e), including how the  
7           amounts were used related to the online portal required  
8           under this section.

9           (g) INCENTIVES.—The Secretary shall consider the  
10          implementation and maintenance by a public housing  
11          agency of the online portal required under this section in  
12          the annual public housing assessment system described in  
13          part 902 of title 24, Code of Federal Regulations, or any  
14          successor regulation.

15          (h) EXEMPTIONS.—

16               (1) IN GENERAL.—The requirement to create  
17               and maintain an online portal under this section  
18               shall not apply to small public housing agencies.

19               (2) ALTERNATE METHOD.—A small public  
20               housing agency that is exempted under paragraph  
21               (1) shall develop, implement, and submit to the Sec-  
22               retary alternate methods for fulfilling the require-  
23               ments under subsections (a) through (d), in par-  
24               ticular paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a).

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