To direct the Attorney General to establish a grant program to establish, create, and administer the violent incident clearance and technology investigative method, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 28, 2021

Mrs. Demings (for herself, Mrs. Axne, Mr. Evans, Ms. Kelly of Illinois, Mrs. McBath, and Mr. O’Halleran) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To direct the Attorney General to establish a grant program to establish, create, and administer the violent incident clearance and technology investigative method, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods Act of 2021” or the “VICTIM Act of 2021”.

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

5 Congress finds the following:

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(1) Research indicates that law enforcement agencies can impact clearance rates by improving investigative processes, detective effort, and organizational oversight and supervision of investigations.

(2) Law enforcement agencies that demonstrate higher rates of clearance for homicides and non-fatal shootings—

(A) have more structured oversight and formal interactions between investigative units and agency leadership;

(B) are more likely to have investigative units that have good relationships with other units and that share information well with other units;

(C) have investigative units that have specific goals and performance metrics for both the unit and for investigators within that unit; tend to assign most, if not all, serious crimes to an investigator, at least for preliminary review;

(D) have investigators who more frequently respond to the initial crime scene shortly after crimes have been reported;

(E) have investigators who either have (or are required to have) specialized experience before joining investigative units or are expected
to be trained on specific skills once they join those units;

(F) often have standard operating procedures for investigations, where cases are managed carefully and have requirements for completion;

(G) tend to support their investigative units, both in terms of resources, as well as symbolically; and

(H) have better relationships with their community, even if no specific community-oriented campaign or initiative exists between investigative units and community groups.

(3) Criminal justice agencies should collaborate among each other and share best practices for solving homicides and non-fatal shootings.

(4) A comprehensive community engagement strategy concerning gun violence is essential to improve clearance rates for homicides and non-fatal shootings.

SEC. 3. GRANT PROGRAM WITH RESPECT TO VIOLENT INCIDENT CLEARANCE AND TECHNOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIVE METHODS.

(a) In general.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General
shall establish a grant program (in this Act referred to
as the “Program”) within the Office of Justice Programs
to establish, implement, and administer violent incident
clearance and technological investigative methods.

(b) GRANT AUTHORITY.—In carrying out the Pro-
gram, the Attorney General may award a grant to an eligi-
bble recipient that submits an application for the Program.

(c) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT.—Grants awarded under
the Program shall be awarded to a State, Tribal, or local
law enforcement agency or prosecuting office, or a group
of agencies or offices, and may be used for an eligible
project under subsection (e).

(d) APPLICATIONS.—A law enforcement agency ap-
plying to receive a grant under the Program shall submit
to the Attorney General an application at such time, in
such manner, and containing or accompanied by such in-
formation as the Attorney General may reasonably re-
quire.

(e) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—Grant funds awarded
under the Program shall be used to improve clearance
rates for homicides and non-fatal shootings by—

(1) ensuring the retention of detectives cur-
rently assigned to investigate homicides and non-
fatal shootings;
(2) hiring additional detectives to investigate homicides and non-fatal shootings;

(3) training detectives in policies and procedures determined to improve detectives’ ability to effectively investigate and solve homicides and non-fatal shootings;

(4) training police personnel to address the needs of victims and family members from homicides and non-fatal shootings;

(5) hiring additional patrol officers to replace officers who have been transferred to detective;

(6) acquiring, upgrading, or replacing investigative or evidence processing technology or equipment;

(7) hiring additional evidence processing personnel;

(8) ensuring personnel responsible for evidence processing have sufficient resources and training;

(9) hiring and training of personnel to analyze violent crime, specifically with regards to the use of intelligence information of criminal networks and the potential for retaliation among gangs or groups, and the geographic trends among homicides and shootings;

(10) ensuring victim services and personnel are sufficiently funded, staffed, and trained;
(11) ensuring victims and family members of
homicides and non-fatal shootings have access to re-
sources, including—

(A) convenient mental health treatment
and grief counseling;

(B) funeral and burial expenses;

(C) relocation expenses;

(D) emergency shelter;

(E) emergency transportation; and

(F) lost wage assistance;

(12) developing competitive and evidence-based
programs to improve homicide and non-fatal shoot-
ing clearance rates; or

(13) developing best practices for improving ac-
cess to and acceptance of victim services, including
those that promote medical and psychological
wellness, ongoing counseling, legal advice, and finan-
cial compensation.

(f) **FEDERAL SHARE.**—The Federal share of the cost
of a project assisted with a grant under the Program shall
not exceed 100 percent if the grant is awarded on or be-
fore the date of December 31, 2032. The Federal share
of the cost of a project assisted with a grant under the
Program shall not exceed 50 percent if such grant is
awarded after December 31, 2032.
(g) Report by Eligible Recipient.—Not later than 365 days after receiving a grant under the Program, an eligible recipient shall submit to the Attorney General a report on the Program, including—

(1) the number of homicide and non-fatal shooting detectives hired by the grantee;

(2) the number of evidence processing personnel hired by the grantee;

(3) any training provided to existing or newly hired homicide and non-fatal shooting detectives designed to assist in the solving of crimes and improve clearance rates;

(4) any new evidence processing technology or equipment or any upgrades to existing evidence technology or equipment;

(5) any training provided to evidence processing personnel to improve outcomes and capacity; and

(6) data regarding clearance rates for homicides and non-fatal shootings and crime trends from within each jurisdiction in which grant funds were provided.

(h) National Institute of Justice Evaluation and Report to Congress.—

(1) Evaluation.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, and
every two years thereafter, the National Institute of Justice shall conduct an evaluation of the practices deployed by grant recipients to identify policies and procedures that have successfully improved clearance rates for homicides and non-fatal shootings.

(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days after completion of the evaluation under paragraph (1), the Attorney General shall submit to Congress a report including—

(A) the results of the evaluation conducted by the National Institute of Justice; and

(B) information reported by each eligible entity under subsection (i).

(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Program $100,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2032.

(2) PERCENT FOR CERTAIN ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS.—10 percent of each appropriation made under paragraph (1) shall be awarded to a Tribal law enforcement agency or prosecuting office, or a group of such agencies or offices.

(j) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY DEFINED.—In this section, the term “law enforcement agency” means a pub-
agency charged with policing functions, including any of its component bureaus (such as governmental victim services programs or Village Public Safety Officers), including those referred to in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of section 2(10) of the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act (25 U.S.C. 2801(10)(B)(C)), as amended by section 203(b) of the Indian Arts and Crafts Amendments (Public Law 111–211).