

your coast and mine. As ocean temperatures increase, two things happen: 1, ice in the Arctic and Antarctic melts, adding water to the ocean; and, 2, seawater expands—remember those zettajoules. Combined, the effects of melting ice sheets and expanding seawater volume increases sea levels along our coasts. That slow creep of sea level rise is not as slow as it used to be. The ocean rose more than twice as fast this decade as it did the previous decade. Last year, it set a new record high.

The news gets worse. There is a centuries-long time lag in the natural systems causing sea level rise, meaning we are only seeing the leading edge of what we have caused. Even if we stopped emitting greenhouse gases today, ocean levels would continue to rise for decades.

NOAA has predicted that the acceleration will continue; that sea level rise along the U.S. coastline will rise 10 to 12 inches just over the next 30 years, as much as the entire rise measured over the last century.

One way to help deal with this is through the National Coastal Resilience Fund, a grant program that restores, increases, and strengthens natural infrastructure to protect coastal communities and to protect habitats for fish and wildlife. The fund invests in conservation projects that restore or expand our natural protections: coastal marshes and wetlands, dunes and beach systems, oyster and coral reefs, coastal forests, rivers and flood plains, and barrier islands that minimize the impacts of storms and sea level rise, as well as other dangerous events like lost fisheries from ocean warming.

This program is so direly needed that it is vastly oversubscribed. In 2022, over \$600 million of projects went unfunded because there simply wasn't enough money in the program. Nearly half a billion dollars in unfunded protections for vulnerable coastal communities requesting Federal assistance.

I will give you one example of where this program is important. In 2019, the fund awarded \$1 million to the Alaskan Native village of Shaktoolik to restore coastal dune habitat and to construct a natural storm surge berm. Well, last year, along came Typhoon Merbok and devastated parts of the Alaskan coastline. Shaktoolik was at the epicenter of the typhoon. The berm successfully protected the community from devastating coastal flooding. As one resident noted, "The berm saved our lives." That is the value of resiliency, planning, and investment.

But more than just brace ourselves for the baked-in effects of fossil fuel emissions poisoning our planet, we need to head off climate change at the oil spigot. That means taking on the fossil fuel industry's increasingly desperate lies and its well-funded political juggernaut that does such evil in this building. We know how to solve this problem; we just don't do it, because fossil fuel fingers creep through so many corners of the Capitol.

In the time it took me to deliver this speech, around 6,000 Hiroshima bombs of excess heat energy were put into our oceans. Every day, it is getting worse. We completely underestimate how bad things are going to get—completely. Even people who care about climate change and believe that it is real and aren't in tow to the fossil fuel industry and its dark money, they still completely underestimate how bad this is going to get. And the tragedy is, it has always been preventable simply by moving to a productive, economically valuable, clean energy future and stopping our indulgence of fossil fuel pollution and obstruction. If what is going on with climate change heat going into our oceans is not enough to wake us up, I do not know what will. It is certainly—certainly—time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I would like to go through some of the materials that would ordinarily be in the evening wrap-up, but nobody watching should think we are in evening wrap-up. We are still expecting a great number of votes this evening when everything gets worked out.

#### RECRUIT AND RETAIN ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 86, S. 546.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 546) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize law enforcement agencies to use COPS grants for recruitment activities, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary with an amendment, as follows:

(The part of the bill intended to be stricken is in boldfaced brackets, and the part of the bill intended to be inserted is in italic.)

S. 546

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Recruit and Retain Act".

#### SEC. 2. IMPROVING COPS GRANTS FOR POLICE HIRING PURPOSES.

(a) GRANT USE EXPANSION.—Section 1701(b) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381(b)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (23) as paragraphs (6) through (24), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

"(5) to support hiring activities by law enforcement agencies experiencing declines in officer recruitment applications by reducing application-related fees, such as fees for background checks, psychological evaluations, and testing[.]".

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 1701(b)(23) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381(b)(23)) is amended by striking "(21)" and inserting "(22)".

#### SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.

Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (i) through (n) as subsections (j) through (o), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (h) the following:

"(i) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Not more than 2 percent of a grant made for the hiring or rehiring of additional career law enforcement officers may be used for costs incurred to administer such grant."

#### SEC. 4. PIPELINE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amended by inserting after subsection (o) the following:

"(p) COPS PIPELINE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.—

"(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'eligible entity' means a law enforcement agency in partnership with not less than 1 educational institution, which may include 1 or any combination of the following:

"(A) An elementary school.

"(B) A secondary school.

"(C) An institution of higher education.

"(D) A Hispanic-serving institution.

"(E) A historically Black college or university.

"(F) A Tribal college.

"(2) GRANTS.—The Attorney General shall award competitive grants to eligible entities for recruiting activities that—

"(A) support substantial student engagement for the exploration of potential future career opportunities in law enforcement;

"(B) strengthen recruitment by law enforcement agencies experiencing a decline in recruits, or high rates of resignations or retirements;

"(C) enhance community interactions between local youth and law enforcement agencies that are designed to increase recruiting; and

"(D) otherwise improve the outcomes of local law enforcement recruitment through activities such as dedicated programming for students, work-based learning opportunities, project-based learning, mentoring, community liaisons, career or job fairs, work site visits, job shadowing, apprenticeships, or skills-based internships.

"(3) FUNDING.—Of the amounts made available to carry out this part for a fiscal year, the Attorney General may use not more than \$3,000,000 to carry out this subsection."

#### SEC. 5. COPS GRANT GUIDANCE FOR AGENCIES OPERATING BELOW BUDGETED STRENGTH.

Section 1704 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10384) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(d) GUIDANCE FOR UNDERSTAFFED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.—

"(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

"(A) COVERED APPLICANT.—The term 'covered applicant' means an applicant for a hiring grant under this part seeking funding for a law enforcement agency operating below the budgeted strength of the law enforcement agency.

"(B) BUDGETED STRENGTH.—The term 'budgeted strength' means the employment of the maximum number of sworn law enforcement officers the budget of a law enforcement agency allows the agency to employ.

“(2) PROCEDURES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall establish consistent procedures for covered applicants, including guidance that—

“(A) clarifies that covered applicants remain eligible for funding under this part; and

“(B) enables covered applicants to attest that the funding from a grant awarded under this part is not being used by the law enforcement agency to supplant State or local funds, as described in subsection (a).

“(3) PAPERWORK REDUCTION.—In developing the procedures and guidance under paragraph (2), the Attorney General shall take measures to reduce paperwork requirements for grants to covered applicants.”.

#### SEC. 6. STUDY ON POLICE RECRUITMENT.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to consider the comprehensive effects of recruitment and attrition rates on Federal, State, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies in the United States, to identify—

(A) the primary reasons that law enforcement officers—

(i) join law enforcement agencies; and

(ii) resign or retire from law enforcement agencies;

(B) how the reasons described in subparagraph (A) may have changed over time;

(C) the effects of recruitment and attrition on public safety;

(D) the effects of electronic media on recruitment efforts;

(E) barriers to the recruitment and retention of Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers; and

(F) recommendations for potential ways to address barriers to the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers, including the barriers identified in subparagraph (E).

(2) REPRESENTATIVE CROSS-SECTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall endeavor to ensure accurate representation of law enforcement agencies in the study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) by surveying a broad cross-section of law enforcement agencies—

(i) from various regions of the United States;

(ii) of different sizes; and

(iii) from rural, suburban, and urban jurisdictions.

(B) METHODS DESCRIPTION.—The study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include in the report under subsection (b) a description of the methods used to identify a representative sample of law enforcement agencies.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 540 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report containing the study conducted under subsection (a); and

(2) make the report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available online.

(c) CONFIDENTIALITY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall ensure that the study conducted under subsection (a) protects the privacy of participating law enforcement agencies.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I further ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 546), as amended, was passed, as follows:

S. 546

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Recruit and Retain Act”.

#### SEC. 2. IMPROVING COPS GRANTS FOR POLICE HIRING PURPOSES.

(a) GRANT USE EXPANSION.—Section 1701(b) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381(b)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (23) as paragraphs (6) through (24), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

“(5) to support hiring activities by law enforcement agencies experiencing declines in officer recruitment applications by reducing application-related fees, such as fees for background checks, psychological evaluations, and testing;”.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 1701(b)(23) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381(b)(23)) is amended by striking “(21)” and inserting “(22)”.

#### SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.

Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (i) through (n) as subsections (j) through (o), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (h) the following:

“(i) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—Not more than 2 percent of a grant made for the hiring or rehiring of additional career law enforcement officers may be used for costs incurred to administer such grant.”.

#### SEC. 4. PIPELINE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amended by inserting after subsection (o) the following:

“(p) COPS PIPELINE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.—

“(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term ‘eligible entity’ means a law enforcement agency in partnership with not less than 1 educational institution, which may include 1 or any combination of the following:

“(A) An elementary school.

“(B) A secondary school.

“(C) An institution of higher education.

“(D) A Hispanic-serving institution.

“(E) A historically Black college or university.

“(F) A Tribal college.

“(2) GRANTS.—The Attorney General shall award competitive grants to eligible entities for recruiting activities that—

“(A) support substantial student engagement for the exploration of potential future career opportunities in law enforcement;

“(B) strengthen recruitment by law enforcement agencies experiencing a decline in recruits, or high rates of resignations or retirements;

“(C) enhance community interactions between local youth and law enforcement agen-

cies that are designed to increase recruiting; and

“(D) otherwise improve the outcomes of local law enforcement recruitment through activities such as dedicated programming for students, work-based learning opportunities, project-based learning, mentoring, community liaisons, career or job fairs, work site visits, job shadowing, apprenticeships, or skills-based internships.

“(3) FUNDING.—Of the amounts made available to carry out this part for a fiscal year, the Attorney General may use not more than \$3,000,000 to carry out this subsection.”.

#### SEC. 5. COPS GRANT GUIDANCE FOR AGENCIES OPERATING BELOW BUDGETED STRENGTH.

Section 1704 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10384) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) GUIDANCE FOR UNDERSTAFFED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.—

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) COVERED APPLICANT.—The term ‘covered applicant’ means an applicant for a hiring grant under this part seeking funding for a law enforcement agency operating below the budgeted strength of the law enforcement agency.

“(B) BUDGETED STRENGTH.—The term ‘budgeted strength’ means the employment of the maximum number of sworn law enforcement officers the budget of a law enforcement agency allows the agency to employ.

“(2) PROCEDURES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall establish consistent procedures for covered applicants, including guidance that—

“(A) clarifies that covered applicants remain eligible for funding under this part; and

“(B) enables covered applicants to attest that the funding from a grant awarded under this part is not being used by the law enforcement agency to supplant State or local funds, as described in subsection (a).

“(3) PAPERWORK REDUCTION.—In developing the procedures and guidance under paragraph (2), the Attorney General shall take measures to reduce paperwork requirements for grants to covered applicants.”.

#### SEC. 6. STUDY ON POLICE RECRUITMENT.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to consider the comprehensive effects of recruitment and attrition rates on Federal, State, Tribal, and local law enforcement agencies in the United States, to identify—

(A) the primary reasons that law enforcement officers—

(i) join law enforcement agencies; and

(ii) resign or retire from law enforcement agencies;

(B) how the reasons described in subparagraph (A) may have changed over time;

(C) the effects of recruitment and attrition on public safety;

(D) the effects of electronic media on recruitment efforts;

(E) barriers to the recruitment and retention of Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers; and

(F) recommendations for potential ways to address barriers to the recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers, including the barriers identified in subparagraph (E).

(2) REPRESENTATIVE CROSS-SECTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall endeavor to ensure accurate representation of law enforcement agencies in the study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) by surveying a broad cross-section of law enforcement agencies—

(i) from various regions of the United States;

(ii) of different sizes; and

(iii) from rural, suburban, and urban jurisdictions.

(B) **METHODS DESCRIPTION.**—The study conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include in the report under subsection (b) a description of the methods used to identify a representative sample of law enforcement agencies.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than 540 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report containing the study conducted under subsection (a); and

(2) make the report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available online.

(c) **CONFIDENTIALITY.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall ensure that the study conducted under subsection (a) protects the privacy of participating law enforcement agencies.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### STRONG COMMUNITIES ACT OF 2023

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 87, S. 994.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 994) to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide that COPS grants funds may be used for local law enforcement recruits to attend schools or academies if the recruits agree to serve in precincts of law enforcement agencies in their communities.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, with amendments, as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are in boldfaced brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are in italic.)

S. 994

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Strong Communities Act of 2023”.

#### SEC. 2. STRONG COMMUNITIES PROGRAM.

Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amended—

[(1) by redesignating subsection (m) as subsection (n); and

[(2) by inserting after subsection (1)] *adding at the end the following:*

“(1m) COPS STRONG COMMUNITIES PROGRAM.—

“(1) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection:

“(A) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(i) an institution of higher education, as defined in section 101 of the Higher Edu-

cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001), that, in coordination or through an agreement with a local law enforcement agency, offers a law enforcement training program; or

“(ii) a local law enforcement agency that offers a law enforcement training program.

“(B) **LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.**—The term ‘local law enforcement agency’ means an agency of a State, unit of local government, or Indian Tribe that is authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

“(2) **GRANTS.**—The Attorney General may use amounts otherwise appropriated to carry out this section for a fiscal year (beginning with fiscal year 2023) to make competitive grants to local law enforcement agencies to be used for officers and recruits to attend law enforcement training programs at eligible entities if the officers and recruits agree to serve in law enforcement agencies in their communities.

“(3) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible for a grant through a local law enforcement agency under this subsection, each officer or recruit described in paragraph (2) shall—

“(A) serve as a full-time law enforcement officer for a total of not fewer than 4 years during the 8-year period beginning on the date on which the officer or recruit completes a law enforcement training program for which the officer or recruit receives benefits;

“(B) complete the service described in subparagraph (A) in a local law enforcement agency located within—

“(i) 7 miles of the residence of the officer or recruit where the officer or recruit has resided for not fewer than 5 years; or

“(ii) if the officer or recruit resides in a county with fewer than 150,000 residents, within 20 miles of the residence of the officer or recruit where the officer or recruit has resided for not fewer than 5 years; and

“(C) submit to the eligible entity providing a law enforcement training program to the officer or recruit evidence of employment of the officer or recruit in the form of a certification by the chief administrative officer of the local law enforcement agency where the officer or recruit is employed.

“(4) **REPAYMENT.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—If an officer or recruit does not complete the service described in paragraph (3), the officer or recruit shall submit to the local law enforcement agency an amount equal to any benefits the officer or recruit received through the local law enforcement agency under this subsection.

“(B) **REGULATIONS.**—The Attorney General shall promulgate regulations that establish categories of extenuating circumstances under which an officer or recruit may be excused from repayment under subparagraph (A).”.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I further ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendments be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendments were agreed to.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (S. 994), as amended, was passed, as follows:

S. 994

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Strong Communities Act of 2023”.

#### SEC. 2. STRONG COMMUNITIES PROGRAM.

Section 1701 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10381) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(o) COPS STRONG COMMUNITIES PROGRAM.—

“(1) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this subsection:

“(A) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(i) an institution of higher education, as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001), that, in coordination or through an agreement with a local law enforcement agency, offers a law enforcement training program; or

“(ii) a local law enforcement agency that offers a law enforcement training program.

“(B) **LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.**—The term ‘local law enforcement agency’ means an agency of a State, unit of local government, or Indian Tribe that is authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

“(2) **GRANTS.**—The Attorney General may use amounts otherwise appropriated to carry out this section for a fiscal year (beginning with fiscal year 2023) to make competitive grants to local law enforcement agencies to be used for officers and recruits to attend law enforcement training programs at eligible entities if the officers and recruits agree to serve in law enforcement agencies in their communities.

“(3) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible for a grant through a local law enforcement agency under this subsection, each officer or recruit described in paragraph (2) shall—

“(A) serve as a full-time law enforcement officer for a total of not fewer than 4 years during the 8-year period beginning on the date on which the officer or recruit completes a law enforcement training program for which the officer or recruit receives benefits;

“(B) complete the service described in subparagraph (A) in a local law enforcement agency located within—

“(i) 7 miles of the residence of the officer or recruit where the officer or recruit has resided for not fewer than 5 years; or

“(ii) if the officer or recruit resides in a county with fewer than 150,000 residents, within 20 miles of the residence of the officer or recruit where the officer or recruit has resided for not fewer than 5 years; and

“(C) submit to the eligible entity providing a law enforcement training program to the officer or recruit evidence of employment of the officer or recruit in the form of a certification by the chief administrative officer of the local law enforcement agency where the officer or recruit is employed.

“(4) **REPAYMENT.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—If an officer or recruit does not complete the service described in paragraph (3), the officer or recruit shall submit to the local law enforcement agency an amount equal to any benefits the officer or recruit received through the local law enforcement agency under this subsection.

“(B) **REGULATIONS.**—The Attorney General shall promulgate regulations that establish categories of extenuating circumstances under which an officer or recruit may be excused from repayment under subparagraph (A).”.