

103^D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1727

To establish a program of grants to States for arson research, prevention,
and control, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 20, 1993

Mr. BOUCHER (for himself, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. BROWN of California, Mr. HOYER, Mr. WELDON, Mr. STOKES, Mr. LEACH, Mr. BARLOW, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. LAZIO, Mr. MAZZOLI, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. TOWNS, Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. MEEHAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

A BILL

To establish a program of grants to States for arson
research, prevention, and control, 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 “Arson Prevention Act
5 of 1993”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

1 (1) arson is a serious and costly problem, and
2 is responsible for approximately 25 percent of all
3 fires in the United States;

4 (2) arson is a leading cause of fire deaths, ac-
5 counting for approximately 700 deaths annually in
6 the United States, and is the leading cause of prop-
7 erty damage due to fire in the United States;

8 (3) estimates of arson property losses are in the
9 range of \$2,000,000,000 annually, or approximately
10 1 of every 4 dollars lost to fire;

11 (4) the incidence of arson in the United States
12 is seriously underreported, in part because of the
13 lack of adequate participation by local jurisdictions
14 in the National Fire Incident Reporting System
15 (NFIRS) and the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR)
16 program;

17 (5) there is a need for expanded training pro-
18 grams for arson investigators;

19 (6) there is a need for improved programs de-
20 signed to enable volunteer firefighters to detect
21 arson crimes and to preserve evidence vital to the in-
22 vestigation and prosecution of arson cases;

23 (7) according to the National Fire Protection
24 Association, of all the suspicious and incendiary fires

1 estimated to occur, only one-third are confirmed as
2 arson; and

3 (8) improved training of arson investigators will
4 increase the ability of fire departments to identify
5 suspicious and incendiary fires, and will result in
6 increased and more effective prosecution of arson
7 offenses.

8 **SEC. 3. ARSON PREVENTION GRANTS.**

9 The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974
10 is amended by adding after section 24 the following new
11 section:

12 “ARSON PREVENTION GRANTS

13 “SEC. 25. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator,
14 through the Office, shall carry out a demonstration pro-
15 gram of grant awards, not to exceed 10 in number, to
16 States, or consortia thereof, for programs relating to arson
17 research, prevention, and control. In carrying out the re-
18 quirements of this section, the Administrator shall award
19 2-year grants on a competitive, merit basis to States for
20 projects which have one or more of the following goals:

21 “(1) To improve the training by States leading
22 to professional certification of arson investigators, in
23 accordance with nationally recognized certification
24 standards.

25 “(2) To provide resources for the formation of
26 arson task forces or interagency organizational ar-

1 rangements involving police and fire departments
2 and other relevant local agencies such as State arson
3 bureaus and the State fire marshal's office.

4 “(3) To combat fraud as a cause of arson and
5 to advance research at the State and local levels on
6 the significance and prevention of fraud as a motive
7 for setting fires.

8 “(4) To provide for management of arson
9 squads, including—

10 “(A) training courses for fire departments
11 in arson case management, including standard-
12 ization of investigative techniques and reporting
13 methodology;

14 “(B) preparation of arson unit manage-
15 ment guides; and

16 “(C) the development and dissemination of
17 new public education materials relating to the
18 arson problem.

19 “(5) To combat civil unrest as a cause of arson
20 and to advance research at the State and local levels
21 on the prevention and control of arson linked to
22 urban disorders.

23 “(6) To combat juvenile arson, such as juvenile
24 fire-setter counseling programs and similar interven-

1 tion programs, and to advance research at the State
2 and local levels on the prevention of juvenile arson.

3 “(7) To combat drug-related arson and to ad-
4 vance research at the State and local levels on the
5 causes and prevention of drug-related arson.

6 “(8) To combat domestic violence as a cause of
7 arson and to advance research at the State and local
8 levels on the prevention of arson arising from do-
9 mestic violence.

10 “(9) To combat arson in rural areas and to im-
11 prove the capability of firefighters to identify and
12 prevent arson initiated fires in rural areas and pub-
13 lic forests.

14 “(10) To improve the capability of firefighters
15 to identify and combat arson through expanded
16 training programs, including—

17 “(A) training courses at the State fire
18 academies; and

19 “(B) innovative courses developed with the
20 National Fire Academy and made available to
21 volunteer firefighters through regional delivery
22 methods, including teleconferencing and sat-
23 ellite delivered television programs.

24 “(b) STRUCTURING OF APPLICATIONS.—The Admin-
25 istrator shall assist grant applicants in structuring their

1 applications so as to ensure that at least one grant is
2 awarded for each goal described in the paragraphs of sub-
3 section (a).

4 “(c) STATE QUALIFICATION CRITERIA.—In order to
5 qualify for a grant under this section, a State or consor-
6 tium thereof shall provide assurances adequate to the Ad-
7 ministrator that it—

8 “(1) will obtain at least 25 percent of the cost
9 of programs funded by the grant, in cash or in kind,
10 from non-Federal sources;

11 “(2) will not as a result of receiving the grant
12 decrease its prior level of spending of funds from
13 non-Federal sources for arson research, prevention,
14 and control programs;

15 “(3) will use no more than 10 percent of funds
16 provided under the grant for administrative costs of
17 the programs; and

18 “(4) is making efforts to ensure that all local
19 jurisdictions will provide arson data to the National
20 Fire Incident Reporting System or the Uniform
21 Crime Reporting program.

22 “(d) EXTENSION.—Grants awarded under this sec-
23 tion may be extended for additional periods, at the discre-
24 tion of the Administrator, subject to the availability of ap-
25 propriations.

1 “(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Office shall pro-
2 vide technical assistance to States in carrying out pro-
3 grams funded by grants under this section.

4 “(f) CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION.—In carry-
5 ing out the requirements of this section, the Administrator
6 shall consult and cooperate with other Federal agencies
7 to enhance program effectiveness and avoid duplication of
8 effort, including the conduct of regular meetings initiated
9 by the Administrator with other Federal agencies con-
10 cerned with arson and concerned with efforts to develop
11 a more comprehensive profile of the magnitude of the na-
12 tional arson problem.

13 “(g) ASSESSMENT.—The Administrator shall, not
14 later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this
15 section, submit a report to the Congress identifying grants
16 made, specifying the identity of grantees, stating the goals
17 of each grant, and containing a preliminary assessment
18 of the effectiveness of the grants program under this
19 section.

20 “(h) REGULATIONS.—Within 90 days after the date
21 of enactment of this section, the Administrator shall issue
22 regulations to implement this section, which shall establish
23 procedures for grant applications.

24 “(i) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

1 “(1) the term “arson” includes all incendiary
2 and suspicious fires; and

3 “(2) the term “Office” means the Office of Fire
4 Prevention and Arson Control of the United States
5 Fire Administration.

6 “(j) ADMINISTRATION.—The Administrator shall di-
7 rectly administer the grants program required by this sec-
8 tion, and shall not enter into any contract under which
9 the grants program or any portion thereof will be adminis-
10 tered by another party.”.

11 **SEC. 4. VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER TRAINING.**

12 Section 24(a)(2) of the Federal Fire Prevention and
13 Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2220(a)(2)) is amended
14 by inserting “, with particular emphasis on the needs of
15 volunteer firefighters for improved and more widely avail-
16 able arson training courses” after “detection, and con-
17 trol”.

18 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

19 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Ad-
20 ministrator of the United States Fire Administration—

21 (1) \$500,000 for fiscal year 1994 for basic re-
22 search on the development of an advanced course on
23 arson prevention;

24 (2) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 1995 for the ex-
25 pansion of arson investigator training programs at

1 the National Fire Academy under section 24 of the
2 Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974
3 and at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Cen-
4 ter, or through regional delivery sites;

5 (3) \$4,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1994
6 and 1995 for carrying out section 25 of the Federal
7 Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974; and

8 (4) \$250,000 for each of the fiscal years 1994
9 and 1995 for salaries and expenses for carrying out
10 such section 25.

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