118TH CONGRESS
1ST Session

S. ______

To establish a pilot program to address technology-related abuse in domestic violence cases.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Wyden introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on ____________________

A BILL

To establish a pilot program to address technology-related abuse in domestic violence cases.

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 “Tech Safety for Victims of Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) In the United States, 41 percent of women and 26 percent of men experience some form of sex-
ual violence, physical violence, or stalking, or a combination thereof, by an intimate partner.

(2) Many victims of intimate partner violence also experience nonphysical forms of abuse.

(3) With the proliferation of digital technology, technological abuse has become increasingly prevalent and pervasive among victims of intimate partner violence.

(4) According to a 2021 study by the National Network to End Domestic Violence, 97 percent of the programs providing support to victims of intimate partner violence have indicated that abusers are making use of technology to stalk, harass, or control victims.

(5) In the United States, 1 in 3 women under the age of 35 report being sexually harassed online, and over half of LGBTQ+ individuals report being the target of online abuse based on their sexual orientation or gender.

(6) Of victims who are stalked using technology—

(A) 67 percent received unwanted phone calls, voice messages, or text messages;

(B) 50 percent received unwanted emails or messages via the internet;
(C) about 35 percent said their activities were monitored using social media;

(D) 27 percent experienced the offender posting or threatening to post inappropriate, unwanted, or personal information about them on the internet; and

(E) 19 percent said the offender spied on them or monitored their activities using technologies such as listening devices, cameras, or computer or cellphone monitoring software.

(7) Technological abuse runs the gamut of technical sophistication, from the most basic social media platforms and phone-based apps to specialty stalkerware apps, demonstrating that technological abuse does not require huge financial resources or complex knowledge of technology.

(8) Rapid advances in the technology and methods for technological abuse present challenges for advocates seeking to advise victims and prevent technological abuse.

(9) The integration of trained technology experts into survivor support networks has been successful in preventing and shielding survivors from technological abuse.
SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means the Director of the Office on Violence Against Women.

(2) ELIGIBLE CONSORTIUM.—The term “eligible consortium” means an association—

(A) between—

(i)(I) 1 or more institutions of higher education that offers a masters, doctoral, or vocational program in information technology, cybersecurity, computer science, or other similar technological discipline; or

(II) 1 or more private or public sector partners in the community with a technical workforce and a plan for recruiting technologists or volunteers to work alongside a victim service provider (as defined in section 40002(a) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12291(a)); and

(ii) 1 or more public or private domestic violence or sexual violence centers; and

(B) which has a letter of support from the local, State, Tribal, or territorial government with jurisdiction over the area in which the ac-
Activities to combat technological abuse will be implemented.

(3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

(4) PILOT PROGRAM.—The term “pilot program” means the pilot program established under section 4(a)(1).

(5) TECHNOLOGICAL ABUSE.—The term “technological abuse” has the meaning given the term in section 40002(a)(40) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(40)).

SEC. 4. PILOT PROGRAM TO COMBAT TECHNOLOGICAL ABUSE.

(a) Pilot Program Authorized.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director, in accordance with paragraph (2), shall establish a pilot program under which the Director may award grants to eligible consortia to combat technological abuse.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In preparing to establish the pilot program—

(A) the Director shall consult with—

(i) the Secretary of Health and Human Services;
(ii) the Secretary of Education; and

(iii) the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission; and

(B) the Director and the officers described in subparagraph (A) shall consult with relevant stakeholders, including—

(i) groups that work on reducing technological abuse; and

(ii) population specific and culturally specific victim service providers.

(3) APPLICATION.—An eligible consortium desiring a grant under this section shall submit to the Director an application at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information, as the Director may reasonably require.

(4) GRANT LIMITS.—

(A) AWARD AMOUNT.—A grant awarded under the pilot program shall be in an amount that is not more than $2,000,000.

(B) NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS.—Not more than 15 grants may be awarded under the pilot program.

(5) DURATION OF PILOT PROGRAM.—The pilot program shall terminate on the date that is 5 years
after the date of the first award under the pilot program.

(b) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant under this section may use the amounts received under the grant to combat technological abuse, including for—

(1) the purchase of new technological devices for victims and survivors of technological abuse; and

(2) any other use, including the provision of victim services, that will reduce technological abuse or assist victims and survivors of technological abuse.

(c) PILOT PROGRAM REVIEW.—

(1) DURING PILOT PROGRAM.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the first award under the pilot program, the Director shall submit to each committee of Congress with jurisdiction of the activities carried out under the pilot program a report—

(A) reviewing the efficacy of the pilot program;

(B) indicating challenges to implementation and possible solutions; and

(C) including a recommendation relating to whether the pilot program should be turned into a permanent program.

(2) AFTER PILOT PROGRAM TERMINATION.—

Not later than 1 year after the date on which the
pilot program terminates under subsection (a)(5),
the Director shall submit to each committee of Con-
gress with jurisdiction of the activities carried out
under the pilot program a report reviewing the effi-
cacy of the pilot program, including best practices
and improvements needed to combat technological
abuse.

(d) Authorization of Appropriations.—There
are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are nec-
essary to carry out this section.

SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE EDUCATION ON
TECHNOLOGICAL ABUSE.

(a) Grant Program Authorized.—The Director
in consultation with the Secretary of Education and the
Secretary of Health and Human Services shall establish
a program under which the Director may award grants
to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher edu-
cation to develop and implement training and educational
programs and technical assistance for organizations and
individuals who provide support for victims of technol-
ogical abuse.

(b) Multiple Grants.—A recipient of a grant
under section 4 is not barred from receiving a grant under
this section.
(c) Use of Grant Funds.—A nonprofit organization or institution of higher education shall use the amounts received under a grant under this section to develop tools, curricula, and other materials.

(d) Grant Program Limits.—

(1) Maximum Amount.—The Director may award a total of not more than $20,000,000 in grants under this section.

(2) Period of Grants.—The Director shall award grants under this section for a period of 5 years.

(e) Authorization of Appropriations.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.