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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To establish a program to make grants for the establishment of prison
libraries.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CLEAVER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish a program to make grants for the establishment
of prison libraries.

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 “Prison Libraries Act
5 of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.**

7 Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment
8 of this Act, the Attorney General shall establish a program
9 to make grants to eligible applicants for the purpose of

1 providing library services to incarcerated individuals in
2 order to advance reintegration efforts, reduce recidivism,
3 and increase educational opportunities.

4 **SEC. 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.**

5 An eligible grantee under this Act is any State or ter-
6 ritory that submits an application that includes the fol-
7 lowing:

8 (1) A comprehensive plan for how the grant will
9 be used, including project objectives, program de-
10 sign, and evaluation process.

11 (2) Proof of the existence of a physical library
12 at a correctional facility or the intention of creating
13 one.

14 (3) Data on the demographics of the population
15 of the facility sufficient to demonstrate a compelling
16 need for funding, including educational level of pris-
17 on population, rates of recidivism, socioeconomic
18 breakdown of the prison population or any other rel-
19 evant data.

20 **SEC. 4. USE OF FUNDS.**

21 Grant amounts shall be used to provide library serv-
22 ices to incarcerated individuals as set forth in section 2,
23 and may include usage for any of the following:

24 (1) Education and job training.

4 (3) Expansion of the infrastructure of prison li-
5 braries to be less restrictive, safety permitted, and
6 more welcoming with design and decor.

12 (A) Have practical library management ex-
13 perience.

14 (B) Demonstrated ability to catalogue, ar-
15 chive, and maintain databases and E-resources.

16 (C) Demonstrated ability to organize week-
17 ly, bi-weekly, and monthly events and activities.

18 (5) Literary training.

19 (6) Digital literacy training;

20 (7) Career readiness programming.

21 (8) Civic engagement programs.

22 (9) Restorative justice programs.

23 (10) Resident led programs.

24 (11) Health and wellness ac

- (12) Cultural exchange and appreciation programs, events, and activities.
- (13) Computer (including laptops) and internet access.
- (14) Book discussion programs.
- (15) Language services, including free English classes.
- (16) Audiobooks and accessible reading materials for the visually impaired and print disabled.
- (17) eBooks.
- (18) Management of book donation programs.
- (19) Audio and visual materials or multimedia.
- (20) Artistic programming such as painting, creative writing, poetry slams, drama, or music.
- (21) Financial literacy.
- (22) Family literacy activities facilitated during in-person visits.
- (23) Resource fairs.
- (24) Making reasonable efforts towards building a working relationship with local public libraries, including—
 - (A) adoption of a standardized guideline for library management;
 - (B) sharing of resources and materials through an interlibrary loan arrangement; and

(C) implementation of coordinated organized events and activities.

3 SEC. 5. PROHIBITED USES.

4 Grant amounts may not be used for the following:

5 (1) Purchasing food, clothes, shoes, or hygiene
6 supplies.

9 (3) Physical and mental care for incarcerated
10 individuals.

11 (4) incarcerated individual transportation.

12 (5) Staff training unrelated to the library serv-
13 ices.

14 (6) General administrative functions or oper-
15 ations of the prison.

16 (7) Facility maintenance aside from the librari-
17 es

18 (8) Other obligations imposed on the facility by
19 law, including establishment of maintenance of a law
20 library.

21 (9) Any other use unrelated to library services,
22 resources, and management.

23 SEC. 6. PRIORITIZATION.

24 The Attorney General shall, in making grants under
25 this Act, comply with the following:

(B) Applicants that add or prioritize post-secondary education curriculum to library programming.

9 (C) Applicants with plans for tangible,
10 positive, and measurable impact for their prison
11 population, including—

12 (i) plans for increasing literacy rates;

13 (ii) plans for increased secondary and

14 post-secondary enrollment and graduation

15 rates:

16 (iii) plans for development of technical
17 and vocational skills:

18 (iv) plans for expanded access to em-
19 ployment opportunities post-release; and

20 (v) any other factors that the Attorney
21 General determines appropriate

22 (D) Applicants with plans for numerous
23 initiatives to maximize benefits and services for
24 their prison population

8 SEC. 7. TERM.

9 A grant under this Act shall be for term of one year,
10 and may be renewed annually for a period of not more
11 than 6 years in total.

12 SEC. 8. REPORTING.

13 Grantees shall submit annual performance measures,
14 including library activity statistics and program outcomes,
15 and expenditure reports to systems established by the At-
16 torney General under section 6(4).

17 SEC. 9. CONDITIONS.

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—A grantee may not charge a fee
19 to any incarcerated individual for the following:

20 (1) Access to physical books.

21 (2) Access to eBook and audiobooks.

22 (3) Access to computers (including laptops) and
23 the internet within the library.

24 (4) Access to educational and artistic materials
25 needed to facilitate learning, training, and or activi-

1 ties, including notebooks, pens, pencils, paints, and
2 similar supplies.

3 (5) Printing services.

4 (6) Any other library services or resources.

5 (b) AVAILABILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM-
6 MING.—A grantee shall make the library space available
7 to post-secondary organizations and personnel for edu-
8 cational programming.

9 **SEC. 10. CONSULTATION.**

10 The Attorney General shall consult with the Director
11 of the Institute of Museum and Library Services in imple-
12 menting this Act.

13 **SEC. 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

14 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
15 this Act \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through
16 2031.