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Mental Health and Safe Communities Act of 2015

Congress: 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Crime and Law Enforcement

Introduced: Aug 5, 2015

Current Status: Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings held.

Latest Action: Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings held. (Feb 10, 2016)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2002>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Cornyn, John [R-TX]

Party: Republican • **State:** TX • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (13 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Cassidy, Bill [R-LA]	R · LA		Oct 19, 2015
Sen. Crapo, Mike [R-ID]	R · ID		Oct 19, 2015
Sen. Graham, Lindsey [R-SC]	R · SC		Oct 19, 2015
Sen. Heller, Dean [R-NV]	R · NV		Oct 19, 2015
Sen. McCain, John [R-AZ]	R · AZ		Oct 19, 2015
Sen. Blunt, Roy [R-MO]	R · MO		Oct 20, 2015
Sen. Roberts, Pat [R-KS]	R · KS		Oct 20, 2015
Sen. Ayotte, Kelly [R-NH]	R · NH		Nov 5, 2015
Sen. Risch, James E. [R-ID]	R · ID		Nov 5, 2015
Sen. Rubio, Marco [R-FL]	R · FL		Dec 7, 2015
Sen. Scott, Tim [R-SC]	R · SC		Dec 9, 2015
Sen. Moran, Jerry [R-KS]	R · KS		Feb 23, 2016
Sen. Rounds, Mike [R-SD]	R · SD		Apr 14, 2016

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Judiciary Committee	Senate	Hearings By (full committee)	Feb 10, 2016

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Crime and Law Enforcement

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 HR 3722	Identical bill	Sep 30, 2016: Referred to the Subcommittee on Research and Technology.
114 S 993	Related bill	Jan 15, 2016: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations.
114 HR 1854	Related bill	Jan 12, 2016: Ordered to be Reported by Voice Vote.
114 HR 731	Related bill	Mar 16, 2015: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations.

Mental Health and Safe Communities Act of 2015

This bill amends the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to authorize the Department of Justice (DOJ) to award grants for: (1) mental health programs and related law enforcement and corrections programs, (2) state compliance with federal mental health records requirements, (3) court-ordered assisted outpatient treatment, (4) pretrial screening and supervision, (5) behavioral health assessments and intervention, (6) forensic assertive community treatment, and (7) the establishment of a National Criminal Justice and Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance Center.

In addition, the bill expands the purposes for which grant funds may be used under existing programs related to: (1) public safety and community policing, (2) staffing for adequate fire and emergency response, (3) school security, and (4) residential substance abuse treatment for inmates.

DOJ must establish a pilot program to determine the effectiveness of diverting eligible offenders to drug or mental health courts.

Each of the federal uniformed services must be provided specialized mental health training.

With respect to an existing grant program for drug treatment alternatives to incarceration, the bill revises program requirements and expands the program to also cover mental health treatment alternatives.

Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act of 2015

DOJ is further authorized to award grants: (1) for sequential intercept mapping, which is aimed at minimizing criminal justice involvement for individuals with mental illness; (2) for various programs related to the behavioral health of veterans; (3) to assist correctional facilities in addressing the needs of inmates with mental illness; and (4) to train law enforcement in responding to situations involving individuals with mental illness.

The bill revises the definition of "preliminarily qualified offenders" who must be targeted by certain grant-funded collaboration programs between mental health and justice agencies.

The bill reauthorizes through FY2020 and revises the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Improvement Amendments Act of 2007.

Current law prohibits the sale or disposition of a firearm or ammunition to any person who has been adjudicated as a mental defective or committed to a mental institution. The bill instead prohibits such a sale or disposition to any person who has been adjudicated mentally incompetent or committed to a psychiatric hospital, as defined by the bill.

The bill also establishes: (1) procedures for administrative review of a determination that a person has been adjudicated mentally incompetent or committed to a psychiatric hospital, and (2) conditions for removal of records from NICS.

The bill reauthorizes through FY2020 the following: (1) adult and juvenile collaboration programs, and (2) mental health courts and qualified drug treatment programs.

Actions Timeline

- **Feb 10, 2016:** Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings held.
- **Aug 5, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Aug 5, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. (text of measure as introduced: CR S6392-6401)