

HR 2868

EQUAL Defense Act of 2019

Congress: 116 (2019–2021, Ended)

Chamber: House

Policy Area: Crime and Law Enforcement

Introduced: May 21, 2019

Current Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

Latest Action: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. (Jun 26, 2019)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/2868>

Sponsor

Name: Rep. Deutch, Theodore E. [D-FL-22]

Party: Democratic • **State:** FL • **Chamber:** House

Cosponsors (7 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Meng, Grace [D-NY-6]	D · NY		Jun 5, 2019
Rep. Grijalva, Raúl M. [D-AZ-3]	D · AZ		Aug 16, 2019
Rep. Kennedy, Joseph P., III [D-MA-4]	D · MA		Dec 19, 2019
Rep. Dean, Madeleine [D-PA-4]	D · PA		Jan 8, 2020
Rep. Demings, Val Butler [D-FL-10]	D · FL		Jan 21, 2020
Rep. Richmond, Cedric L. [D-LA-2]	D · LA		Jan 27, 2020
Rep. Scott, Robert C. "Bobby" [D-VA-3]	D · VA		Jan 29, 2020

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Judiciary Committee	House	Referred to	Jun 26, 2019

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Crime and Law Enforcement

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
116 S 1377	Identical bill	May 8, 2019: Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ensuring Quality Access to Legal Defense Act of 2019 or the EQUAL Defense Act of 2019

This bill establishes and modifies certain programs that support the delivery of public defense services (i.e., legal services for criminal defendants who cannot afford counsel).

Specifically, the bill directs the Department of Justice (DOJ) to award grants to state and local governments, tribal organizations, and public defender offices for public defense. A grant recipient must use the grant to establish a data collection process, develop workload limits, and satisfy specified compensation requirements (e.g., pay parity between public defenders and prosecutors).

The bill also directs DOJ to award grants to nonprofits and government organizations to train public defenders, court-appointed attorneys, and contract attorneys.

Additionally, a state that receives Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program funds must annually submit to DOJ information related to the legal representation of defendants in criminal cases.

It also reauthorizes through FY2022 the student loan repayment program for prosecutors and public defenders and otherwise revises the program, including by increasing the maximum benefit amount.

Actions Timeline

- **Jun 26, 2019:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.
- **May 21, 2019:** Introduced in House
- **May 21, 2019:** Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.