

HR 1408

EQUAL Defense Act of 2021

Congress: 117 (2021–2023, Ended)

Chamber: House

Policy Area: Crime and Law Enforcement

Introduced: Feb 26, 2021

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

Latest Action: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. (Apr 28, 2021)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1408>

Sponsor

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

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

Cosponsors (13 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Dean, Madeleine [D-PA-4]	D · PA		Feb 26, 2021
Rep. Demings, Val Butler [D-FL-10]	D · FL		Feb 26, 2021
Rep. Jackson Lee, Sheila [D-TX-18]	D · TX		Feb 26, 2021
Rep. Meng, Grace [D-NY-6]	D · NY		Feb 26, 2021
Rep. Scott, Robert C. "Bobby" [D-VA-3]	D · VA		Feb 26, 2021
Rep. Scanlon, Mary Gay [D-PA-5]	D · PA		Jun 24, 2021
Rep. Jones, Mondaire [D-NY-17]	D · NY		Jul 2, 2021
Del. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At Large]	D · DC		Dec 13, 2021
Rep. Doggett, Lloyd [D-TX-35]	D · TX		Dec 13, 2021
Rep. Bonamici, Suzanne [D-OR-1]	D · OR		Dec 14, 2021
Rep. Cohen, Steve [D-TN-9]	D · TN		Feb 4, 2022
Rep. Payne, Donald M., Jr. [D-NJ-10]	D · NJ		Mar 15, 2022
Rep. Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9]	D · IL		May 11, 2022

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Judiciary Committee	House	Referred to	Apr 28, 2021

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Crime and Law Enforcement

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
117 HR 9325	Related bill	Nov 17, 2022: Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

Ensuring Quality Access to Legal Defense Act of 2021 or the EQUAL Defense Act of 2021

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.

Finally, it reauthorizes through FY2025 the student loan repayment program for prosecutors and public defenders and otherwise revises the program, including by increasing the maximum benefit amount.

Actions Timeline

- **Apr 28, 2021:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.
- **Feb 26, 2021:** Introduced in House
- **Feb 26, 2021:** Referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.