

S 312

COVID-19 Safer Detention Act of 2021

Congress: 117 (2021–2023, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Crime and Law Enforcement

Introduced: Feb 12, 2021

Current Status: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 68.

Latest Action: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 68. (Jun 8, 2021)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/312>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Durbin, Richard J. [D-IL]

Party: Democratic • **State:** IL • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (9 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Booker, Cory A. [D-NJ]	D · NJ		Feb 12, 2021
Sen. Coons, Christopher A. [D-DE]	D · DE		Feb 12, 2021
Sen. Cramer, Kevin [R-ND]	R · ND		Feb 12, 2021
Sen. Grassley, Chuck [R-IA]	R · IA		Feb 12, 2021
Sen. Tillis, Thomas [R-NC]	R · NC		Feb 12, 2021
Sen. Whitehouse, Sheldon [D-RI]	D · RI		Feb 12, 2021
Sen. Wicker, Roger F. [R-MS]	R · MS		Feb 12, 2021
Sen. Blunt, Roy [R-MO]	R · MO		Feb 16, 2022
Sen. Brown, Sherrod [D-OH]	D · OH		May 19, 2022

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Judiciary Committee	Senate	Reported By	Jun 8, 2021

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Crime and Law Enforcement

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
117 HR 3669	Identical bill	Nov 1, 2022: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.
117 HR 929	Related bill	Apr 23, 2021: Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

COVID-19 Safer Detention Act of 2021

This bill expands statutory authority for federal prisoners to be released before completing their sentences or to be placed in the community to serve the final portion of their sentences.

First, the bill makes changes to the early release pilot program which authorizes the Bureau of Prisons to release early and place on home confinement elderly offenders and terminally ill offenders who meet eligibility criteria. This bill

- expands eligibility to offenders serving time for an offense under the laws of the District of Columbia,
- reduces the amount of time an offender must serve by the good time credits earned by the offender, and
- creates a judicial review process for prisoners.

Second, the bill modifies the compassionate release process which authorizes federal courts to reduce a prisoner's sentence and impose a term of probation or supervised released in certain circumstances. This bill

- expands eligibility to prisoners sentenced before November 1, 1987; and
- specifies that vulnerability to COVID-19 is a basis for compassionate release.

Regarding the judicial review of these release authorities, the bill also (1) authorizes federal courts to appoint counsel to assist defendants, (2) applies statutory rights for crime victims to these proceedings, and (3) shortens the waiting period during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the bill requires the Government Accountability Office to study postrelease, probation, and pretrial services, including recent changes.

Finally, the bill directs the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts to request resources to address staffing needs in each judicial district, including resources that may be necessary as a result of this bill.

Actions Timeline

- **Jun 8, 2021:** Committee on the Judiciary. Reported by Senator Durbin with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Without written report.
- **Jun 8, 2021:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 68.
- **May 27, 2021:** Committee on the Judiciary. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **Feb 12, 2021:** Introduced in Senate
- **Feb 12, 2021:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.