

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State to implement a strategy to combat the efforts of transnational criminal organizations to recruit individuals in the United States via social media platforms and other online services and assess their use of such platforms and services for illicit activities.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KELLY (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. GALLEGO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of State to implement a strategy to combat the efforts of transnational criminal organizations to recruit individuals in the United States via social media platforms and other online services and assess their use of such platforms and services for illicit activities.

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 “Combating Cartels on
5 Social Media Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-**
4 **TEES.**—The term “appropriate congressional com-
5 mittees” means—

6 (A) the Committee on Homeland Security
7 and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on
8 the Judiciary, and the Committee on Foreign
9 Relations of the Senate; and

10 (B) the Committee on Homeland Security,
11 the Committee on the Judiciary, and the Com-
12 mittee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
13 resentatives.

14 (2) **COVERED OPERATOR.**—The term “covered
15 operator” means the operator, developer, or pub-
16 lisher of a covered service.

17 (3) **COVERED SERVICE.**—The term “covered
18 service” means—

19 (A) a social media platform;

20 (B) a mobile or desktop service with direct
21 or group messaging capabilities, but not includ-
22 ing text messaging services without other sub-
23 stantial social functionalities or electronic mail
24 services, that the Secretary of Homeland Secu-
25 rity determines is being or has been used by

1 transnational criminal organizations in connec-
2 tion with matters described in section 3; or

3 (C) a digital platform, or an electronic ap-
4 plication utilizing the digital platform, involving
5 real-time interactive communication between
6 multiple individuals, including multi-player
7 gaming services and immersive technology plat-
8 forms or applications, that the Secretary of
9 Homeland Security determines is being or has
10 been used by transnational criminal organiza-
11 tions in connection with matters described in
12 section 3.

13 (4) CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE.—The term “crimi-
14 nal enterprise” has the meaning given the term
15 “continuing criminal enterprise” in section 408 of
16 the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 848).

17 (5) ILLICIT ACTIVITIES.—The term “illicit ac-
18 tivities” means the following criminal activities that
19 transcend national borders:

20 (A) A violation of section 401 of the Con-
21 trolled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 841).

22 (B) Narcotics trafficking, as defined in
23 section 808 of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin
24 Designation Act (21 U.S.C. 1907).

25 (C) Weapons trafficking.

1 (D) Migrant smuggling, defined as a viola-
2 tion of section 274(a)(1)(A)(ii) of the Immigra-
3 tion and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
4 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii)).

5 (E) Human trafficking, defined as—

6 (i) a violation of section 1590, 1591,
7 or 1592 of title 18, United States Code; or

8 (ii) engaging in severe forms of traf-
9 ficking in persons, as defined in section
10 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Vio-
11 lence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C.
12 7102).

13 (F) Cyber crime, defined as a violation of
14 section 1030 of title 18, United States Code.

15 (G) A violation of any provision that is
16 subject to intellectual property enforcement, as
17 defined in section 302 of the Prioritizing Re-
18 sources and Organization for Intellectual Prop-
19 erty Act of 2008 (15 U.S.C. 8112).

20 (H) Bulk cash smuggling of currency, de-
21 fined as a violation of section 5332 of title 31,
22 United States Code.

23 (I) Laundering the proceeds of the crimi-
24 nal activities described in subparagraphs (A)
25 through (H).

1 (6) TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZA-
2 TION.—The term “transnational criminal organiza-
3 tion” means a group, or network, and associated in-
4 dividuals, that operate transnationally for the pur-
5 poses of obtaining power, influence, or monetary or
6 commercial gain, wholly or in part by certain unlaw-
7 ful means, while advancing their activities through a
8 pattern of crime, corruption, or violence, and while
9 protecting their unlawful activities through a
10 transnational organizational structure and the ex-
11 ploitation of public corruption or transnational logis-
12 tics, financial, or communication mechanisms.

13 **SEC. 3. ASSESSMENT OF ILLICIT USAGE.**

14 Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment
15 of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the At-
16 torney General, and the Secretary of State shall submit
17 to the appropriate congressional committees a joint assess-
18 ment describing—

19 (1) the use of covered services by transnational
20 criminal organizations, or criminal enterprises acting
21 on behalf of transnational criminal organizations, to
22 engage in recruitment efforts, including the recruit-
23 ment of individuals located in the United States, to
24 engage in or provide support with respect to illicit
25 activities occurring in the United States, Mexico, or

1 otherwise in proximity to an international border of
2 the United States;

3 (2) the use of covered services by transnational
4 criminal organizations, or criminal enterprises acting
5 on behalf of transnational criminal organizations, to
6 engage in illicit activities or conduct in support of il-
7 licit activities, including—

8 (A) smuggling or trafficking involving nar-
9 cotics, other controlled substances, precursors
10 thereof, or other items prohibited under the
11 laws of the United States, Mexico, or another
12 relevant jurisdiction, including firearms;

13 (B) human smuggling or trafficking, with
14 a particular focus on the exploitation of chil-
15 dren; and

16 (C) transportation of bulk currency or
17 monetary instruments in furtherance of smug-
18 gling or trafficking; and

19 (3) the existing efforts of the Secretary of
20 Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Sec-
21 retary of State, and relevant government and law
22 enforcement entities to counter, monitor, or other-
23 wise respond to the usage of covered services de-
24 scribed in paragraphs (1) and (2).

1 **SEC. 4. STRATEGY TO COMBAT CARTEL RECRUITMENT ON**
2 **SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PLATFORMS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
4 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland
5 Security, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of State
6 shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees
7 a joint strategy, to be known as the “National Strategy
8 to Combat Illicit Recruitment Activity by Transnational
9 Criminal Organizations on Social Media and Online Plat-
10 forms”, to combat the use of covered services by
11 transnational criminal organizations, or criminal enter-
12 prises acting on behalf of transnational criminal organiza-
13 tions, to recruit individuals located in the United States
14 to engage in or provide support for unlawful activities oc-
15 ccurring in the United States, Mexico, or otherwise in prox-
16 imity to an international border of the United States.

17 (b) ELEMENTS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The strategy required under
19 subsection (a) shall, at a minimum, include the fol-
20 lowing:

21 (A) A proposal to improve cooperation be-
22 tween the Secretary of Homeland Security, the
23 Attorney General, the Secretary of State, and
24 relevant law enforcement entities.

25 (B) Recommendations to implement a
26 process for the voluntary reporting of informa-

1 tion regarding the recruitment efforts of
2 transnational criminal organizations, or crimi-
3 nal enterprises acting on behalf of transnational
4 criminal organizations, in the United States in-
5 volving covered services.

6 (C) A proposal to improve
7 intragovernmental coordination with respect to
8 the matters described in subsection (a), includ-
9 ing between the Department of Homeland Secu-
10 rity, the Department of Justice, the Depart-
11 ment of State, and State, Tribal, and local gov-
12 ernments.

13 (D) A proposal to improve coordination
14 within the Department of Homeland Security,
15 the Department of Justice, and the Department
16 of State and between the components of those
17 Departments with respect to the matters de-
18 scribed in subsection (a).

19 (E) Activities to facilitate increased intel-
20 ligence analysis for law enforcement purposes of
21 efforts of transnational criminal organizations,
22 or criminal enterprises acting on behalf of
23 transnational criminal organizations, to utilize
24 covered services for recruitment to engage in or
25 provide support with respect to illicit activities.

1 (F) Activities to foster international part-
2 nerships and enhance collaboration with foreign
3 governments and, as applicable, multilateral in-
4 stitutions, with respect to the matters described
5 in subsection (a).

6 (G) Activities to specifically increase en-
7 gagement and outreach with youth in border
8 communities, including regarding the recruit-
9 ment tactics of transnational criminal organiza-
10 tions, or criminal enterprises acting on behalf of
11 transnational criminal organizations, and the
12 consequences of participation in illicit activities.

13 (H) A detailed description of the measures
14 used to ensure—

15 (i) law enforcement and intelligence
16 activities focus on the recruitment activi-
17 ties of transitional criminal organizations,
18 or criminal enterprises acting on behalf of
19 transnational criminal organizations, rath-
20 er than individuals the transnational crimi-
21 nal organizations or enterprises attempt to
22 or successfully recruit; and

23 (ii) the protection of privacy rights,
24 civil rights, and civil liberties in carrying
25 out the activities described in clause (i),

1 with a particular focus on the protections
2 in place to protect minors and constitu-
3 tionally protected activities.

4 (2) LIMITATION.—The strategy required under
5 subsection (a) shall not include legislative rec-
6 ommendations or elements predicated on the passage
7 of legislation that is not enacted as of the date on
8 which the strategy is submitted under subsection
9 (a).

10 (c) CONSULTATION.—In drafting and implementing
11 the strategy required under subsection (a), the Secretary
12 of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the Sec-
13 retary of State shall, at a minimum, consult and engage
14 with—

15 (1) the heads of relevant components of the De-
16 partment of Homeland Security, including—

17 (A) the Under Secretary for Intelligence
18 and Analysis;

19 (B) the Under Secretary for Strategy, Pol-
20 icy, and Plans;

21 (C) the Under Secretary for Science and
22 Technology;

23 (D) the Commissioner of U.S. Customs
24 and Border Protection;

1 (E) the Director of U.S. Immigration and
2 Customs Enforcement;

3 (F) the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil
4 Liberties;

5 (G) the Privacy Officer; and

6 (H) the Assistant Secretary of the Office
7 for State and Local Law Enforcement;

8 (2) the heads of relevant components of the De-
9 partment of Justice, including—

10 (A) the Assistant Attorney General for the
11 Criminal Division;

12 (B) the Assistant Attorney General for Na-
13 tional Security;

14 (C) the Assistant Attorney General for the
15 Civil Rights Division;

16 (D) the Chief Privacy and Civil Liberties
17 Officer;

18 (E) the Director of the Organized Crime
19 Drug Enforcement Task Forces;

20 (F) the Director of the Federal Bureau of
21 Investigation; and

22 (G) the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol,
23 Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives;

24 (3) the heads of relevant components of the De-
25 partment of State, including—

1 (A) the Assistant Secretary for Inter-
2 national Narcotics and Law Enforcement Af-
3 fairs;

4 (B) the Assistant Secretary for Western
5 Hemisphere Affairs; and

6 (C) the Coordinator of the Global Engage-
7 ment Center;

8 (4) the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
9 ices;

10 (5) the Secretary of Education; and

11 (6) as selected by the Secretary of Homeland
12 Security, or his or her designee in the Office of Pub-
13 lic Engagement, representatives of border commu-
14 nities, including representatives of—

15 (A) State, Tribal, and local governments,
16 including school districts and local law enforce-
17 ment; and

18 (B) nongovernmental experts in the fields
19 of—

20 (i) civil rights and civil liberties;

21 (ii) online privacy;

22 (iii) humanitarian assistance for mi-
23 grants; and

24 (iv) youth outreach and rehabilitation.

25 (d) IMPLEMENTATION.—

1 ommendations, with respect to the matters
2 described in subsection (b)(1)(B);

3 (ii) the interagency posture with re-
4 spect to the matters covered by the strat-
5 egy required under subsection (a), which
6 shall include a description of collaboration
7 between the Secretary of Homeland Secu-
8 rity, the Attorney General, the Secretary of
9 State, other Federal entities, State, local,
10 and Tribal entities, foreign governments,
11 and, as applicable, multilateral institutions;
12 and

13 (iii) the threat landscape, including
14 new developments related to the recruit-
15 ment efforts of transnational criminal or-
16 ganizations, or criminal enterprises acting
17 on behalf of transnational criminal organi-
18 zations, and the use by such organizations
19 or enterprises of new or emergent covered
20 services and recruitment methods.

21 (B) FORM.—Each report required under
22 subparagraph (A) shall be submitted in unclas-
23 sified form, but may contain a classified annex.

24 (3) CIVIL RIGHTS, CIVIL LIBERTIES, AND PRI-
25 VACY ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 2 years after

1 the date on which the strategy required under sub-
2 section (a) is implemented under paragraph (1), the
3 Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and the
4 Privacy Office of the Department of Homeland Se-
5 curity, in consultation with the Assistant Attorney
6 General for the Civil Rights Division and the Chief
7 Privacy and Civil Liberties Officer of the Depart-
8 ment of Justice, shall submit to the appropriate con-
9 gressional committees a joint report that includes—

10 (A) a detailed assessment of the measures
11 used to ensure the protection of civil rights,
12 civil liberties, and privacy rights in carrying out
13 this section; and

14 (B) recommendations to improve the im-
15 plementation of the strategy required under
16 subsection (a).

17 (4) RULEMAKING.—Prior to implementation of
18 the strategy required under subsection (a) at the
19 Department of Homeland Security, the Secretary of
20 Homeland Security shall issue rules to carry out this
21 section in accordance with section 553 of title 5,
22 United States Code.

23 **SEC. 5. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

24 Nothing in this Act may be construed to expand the
25 statutory law enforcement or regulatory authority of the

1 Department of Homeland Security, the Department of
2 Justice, or the Department of State.

3 **SEC. 6. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.**

4 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-
5 priated for the purpose of carrying out this Act.