

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To pilot the use of image technician positions in the U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection Office of Field Operations.

---

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

---

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

---

**A BILL**

To pilot the use of image technician positions in the U.S.  
Customs and Border Protection Office of Field Operations.

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 TITLES.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Border Enforcement,  
5 Security, and Trade Facilitation Act of 2025” or the  
6 “BEST Facilitation Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. OFFICE OF FIELD OPERATIONS IMAGE TECHNICIAN**  
2 **PILOT PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 411(g) of the Homeland  
4 Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 211(g)) is amended by  
5 adding at the end the following:

6 “(6) IMAGE TECHNICIAN PILOT PROGRAM.—

7 “(A) IMAGE TECHNICIAN 1.—

8 “(i) IN GENERAL.—There shall be in  
9 the Office of Field Operations, Image  
10 Technician 1 positions, which shall be  
11 filled in accordance with the provisions  
12 under chapter 33 (relating to appointments  
13 in the competitive service) and chapters 51  
14 and 53 (relating to classification and rates  
15 of pay) of title 5, United States Code.

16 “(ii) CONDITIONS.—Image Technician  
17 1 positions—

18 “(I) may be filled by existing  
19 U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
20 employees;

21 “(II) are not law enforcement of-  
22 ficer positions;

23 “(III) may not be filled by inde-  
24 pendent contractors; and

1                   “(IV) shall be assigned to a re-  
2                   gional command center established  
3                   under subparagraph (F).

4                   “(iii) DUTIES.—The duties of an  
5                   Image Technician 1 shall include—

6                   “(I) reviewing non-intrusive in-  
7                   spection images of conveyances and  
8                   containers entering or exiting the  
9                   United States through a land, sea, or  
10                  air port of entry or international rail  
11                  crossing;

12                  “(II) assessing whether images of  
13                  conveyances and containers appear to  
14                  contain anomalies indicating the po-  
15                  tential presence of contraband, per-  
16                  sons unlawfully seeking to enter or  
17                  exit the United States, or illicitly con-  
18                  cealed merchandise, including illicit  
19                  drugs and terrorist weapons;

20                  “(III) recommending entry re-  
21                  lease or exit release for any convey-  
22                  ances and containers whenever the im-  
23                  ages of such items do not include no-  
24                  ticeable anomalies indicating the po-  
25                  tential presence of contraband, per-

1                   sons seeking to unlawfully enter or  
2                   exit the United States, or illicitly con-  
3                   cealed merchandise, including illicit  
4                   drugs or terrorist weapons, to the  
5                   U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
6                   Officer responsible for inspecting such  
7                   conveyance or container; and

8                   “(IV) recommending further in-  
9                   spection of any conveyances and con-  
10                  tainers whenever the Image Techni-  
11                  cian reasonably believes that an image  
12                  of any such item contains anomalies  
13                  indicating the potential presence of  
14                  contraband, persons seeking to unlaw-  
15                  fully enter or exit the United States,  
16                  or illicitly concealed merchandise,  
17                  such as illicit drugs or terrorist weap-  
18                  ons, to the U.S. Customs and Border  
19                  Protection officer who is responsible  
20                  for inspecting such conveyance or con-  
21                  tainer.

22                  “(B) IMAGE TECHNICIAN 2.—

23                  “(i) IN GENERAL.—There shall be in  
24                  the Office of Field Operations, Image  
25                  Technician 2 positions, which shall be

1 filled in accordance with the provisions  
2 under chapter 33 (relating to appointments  
3 in the competitive service) and chapters 51  
4 and 53 (relating to classification and rates  
5 of pay) of title 5, United States Code.

6 “(ii) CONDITIONS.—Image Technician  
7 2 positions—

8 “(I) may be filled by existing  
9 U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
10 employees;

11 “(II) are not law enforcement of-  
12 ficer positions;

13 “(III) may not be filled by inde-  
14 pendent contractors; and

15 “(IV) shall be assigned to a re-  
16 gional command center established  
17 under subparagraph (F).

18 “(iii) DUTIES.—The duties of an  
19 Image Technician 2 shall include—

20 “(I) carrying out all of the duties  
21 described in subclauses (I) through  
22 (IV) of subparagraph (A)(ii);

23 “(II) receiving intelligence from  
24 the National Targeting Center regard-  
25 ing tactics, techniques, and proce-

1                   dures being used at ports of entry and  
2                   in the border environment by malign  
3                   actors to facilitate the unlawful entry  
4                   or exit of contraband, persons, or illic-  
5                   itly concealed merchandise, such as illic-  
6                   licit drugs or terrorist weapons; and

7                   “(III) reporting new information  
8                   to the National Targeting Center re-  
9                   garding tactics, techniques, and proce-  
10                  dures being used at ports of entry and  
11                  in the border environment by malign  
12                  actors to facilitate the unlawful entry  
13                  or exit of contraband, persons, or con-  
14                  cealed merchandise, such as illicit  
15                  drugs or terrorist weapons.

16                  “(C) SUPERVISORY U.S. CUSTOMS AND  
17                  BORDER PROTECTION OFFICERS.—

18                  “(i) SUPERVISION.—All image techni-  
19                  cians shall be supervised by a Supervisory  
20                  U.S. Customs and Border Protection Offi-  
21                  cer.

22                  “(ii) DISCRETION AND DECISION-MAK-  
23                  ING AUTHORITY.—The appropriate Super-  
24                  visory U.S. Customs and Border Protec-  
25                  tion Officer, while working with image

1 technicians, shall retain the discretion and  
2 final decision-making authority—

3 “(I) to release conveyances or  
4 cargo for entry; or

5 “(II) to refer such conveyance or  
6 cargo for further inspection.

7 “(iii) TRAINING.—A Supervisory U.S.  
8 Customs and Border Protection Officer  
9 who supervises image technicians shall re-  
10 ceive additional training in accordance with  
11 subparagraph (D).

12 “(D) TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.—All  
13 image technicians shall receive annual training  
14 and additional ad hoc training, to the extent  
15 necessary based on current trends, regarding—

16 “(i) respecting privacy, civil rights,  
17 and civil liberties, including the protections  
18 against unreasonable searches and seizures  
19 afforded by the First and Fourth Amend-  
20 ments to the Constitution of the United  
21 States, as applicable and as interpreted by  
22 the Federal courts;

23 “(ii) analyzing images generated by  
24 non-intrusive inspection technologies or

1 any successor technologies deployed by  
2 U.S. Customs and Border Protection;

3 “(iii) identifying commodities and  
4 merchandise in images generated by non-  
5 intrusive inspection technologies or any  
6 successor technologies deployed by U.S.  
7 Customs and Border Protection;

8 “(iv) identifying contraband, persons  
9 who are seeking to unlawfully enter or exit  
10 the United States, or illicitly concealed  
11 merchandise, such as illicit drugs or ter-  
12 rorist weapons, in images generated by  
13 non-intrusive technologies or any successor  
14 technologies deployed by U.S. Customs and  
15 Border Protection;

16 “(v) tactics, techniques, and proce-  
17 dures being used at ports of entry and in  
18 the border environment by malign actors to  
19 facilitate the unlawful entry or exit of con-  
20 traband, persons, or illicitly concealed mer-  
21 chandise, such as illicit drugs or terrorist  
22 weapons; and

23 “(vi) any other training that the Com-  
24 missioner of U.S. Customs and Border  
25 Protection determines to be relevant to the



1 duties described in subparagraphs (A)(iii)  
2 or (B)(iii).

3 “(E) ANNUAL ASSESSMENT.—All image  
4 technicians shall receive annual testing with re-  
5 spect to their—

6 “(i) accuracy in image analysis;

7 “(ii) timeliness in image analysis; and

8 “(iii) ability to ascertain tactics, tech-  
9 niques, and procedures being used at ports  
10 of entry and in the border environment by  
11 malign actors to facilitate the unlawful  
12 entry or exit of contraband, persons, or il-  
13 licitly concealed merchandise, such as illicit  
14 drugs or terrorist weapons.

15 “(F) COMMAND CENTERS.—As part of the  
16 pilot program established under this paragraph,  
17 the Executive Assistant Commissioner of the  
18 Office of Field Operations shall establish 5 re-  
19 gional command centers at land, rail, air, and  
20 sea ports in which image technicians shall re-  
21 view non-intrusive inspection images.

22 “(G) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing  
23 in this paragraph may be construed to affect  
24 the discretion and final decision-making author-  
25 ity given to U.S. Customs and Border Protec-

1           tion Officers to release conveyances or cargo for  
2           entry or exit or to refer such conveyances or  
3           cargo for further inspection.”.

4           (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

5           (1) SUNSET.—The amendment made by sub-  
6           section (a) shall cease to have effect on the date that  
7           is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this  
8           Act.

9           (2) TRANSFERS AUTHORIZED.—Upon the ter-  
10          mination of the pilot program established by section  
11          411(g)(6) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as  
12          added by subsection (a), individuals occupying  
13          Image Technician 1 or Image Technician 2 positions  
14          in the Office of Field Operations may transfer to  
15          comparable positions within U.S. Customs and Bor-  
16          der Protection or the Department of Homeland Se-  
17          curity.

18       **SEC. 3. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

19          (a) SEMIANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than 180  
20          days after the hiring of the first positions described in sec-  
21          tion 411(g)(6) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as  
22          added by section 2, and every 180 days thereafter, the  
23          Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, in  
24          consultation with the Executive Assistant Commissioner  
25          of the Office of Field Operations, shall submit a report

1 to the Committee on Homeland Security and Govern-  
2 mental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Home-  
3 land Security of the House of Representatives that identi-  
4 fies—

5 (1) the number of Image Technician 1 and  
6 Image Technician 2 positions filled during the re-  
7 porting period;

8 (2) the number of Image Technician 1 and  
9 Image Technician 2 positions currently employed by  
10 the Office of Field Operations, disaggregated by—

11 (A) port of entry or field office;

12 (B) image technician position; and

13 (C) command center, as applicable;

14 (3) the daily average number of images scanned  
15 by each Image Technician 1 and each Image Techni-  
16 cian 2;

17 (4) training methodologies utilized to train  
18 image technicians;

19 (5) assessment passage rates of image techni-  
20 cians;

21 (6) the impact of image technicians on interdic-  
22 tion rates at ports of entry and international rail  
23 crossings at which image technicians are stationed  
24 or from which image technicians review images, in-  
25 cluding—

1 (A) throughput increases or decreases at  
2 such ports of entry and international rail cross-  
3 ings;

4 (B) increases or decreases in waiting times  
5 at such ports of entry and international rail  
6 crossings;

7 (C) average wait times at such ports of  
8 entry and international rail crossings; and

9 (D) increases or decreases of seizures of  
10 contraband, persons seeking to unlawfully enter  
11 or exit the United States, or illicitly concealed  
12 merchandise, such as illicit drugs or terrorist  
13 weapons, broken down by type of seizure and  
14 port of entry or international rail crossing;

15 (7) the impact of image technicians on U.S.  
16 Customs and Border Protection's capability to re-  
17 view non-intrusive inspection images of conveyances  
18 and containers entering or exiting the United States  
19 through a land, sea, or air port of entry or inter-  
20 national rail crossing;

21 (8) an assessment of the effectiveness with  
22 which image technicians carry out the duties de-  
23 scribed in subparagraphs (A)(iii) and (B)(iii) of sec-  
24 tion 411(g)(6) of the Homeland Security Act of  
25 2002, as added by section 2(a), compared to any

1 U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers who  
2 are assigned such duties.

3 (9) the progress made in establishing command  
4 centers under the pilot program established by such  
5 section;

6 (10) any infrastructure or resource needs re-  
7 quired to establish such command centers; and

8 (11) the ports of entry and international rail  
9 crossing, as applicable, that are supported by such  
10 a command center.

11 (b) BIENNIAL BRIEFINGS.—The Executive Assistant  
12 Commissioner of the Office of Field Operations shall pro-  
13 vide biennial briefings to the Committee on Homeland Se-  
14 curity and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the  
15 Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Rep-  
16 resentatives regarding the information described in the  
17 latest report submitted pursuant to subsection (a).