

To the office of U.S. Senator John Cornyn

Re: S 4394 (119th Congress), Promoting Police Leadership Act • Latest action (2026-06-15): Held at the desk.

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Police Leadership Enhancement Grant Act of 2025

The measure, as described from the official record: To improve the quality and accountability of police leadership at state and local levels through federal support for training, certification, and adoption of best practices.

THE PROPOSAL

This Act establishes a voluntary grant program administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to support state and local law enforcement agencies in improving police leadership. Grants may be used for leadership training, accreditation, community engagement programs, and adoption of evidence-based best practices. Participation is entirely voluntary; states and localities may choose to apply or decline without penalty.

To receive a grant, an applicant must agree to three clear conditions: (1) adopt a written use-of-force policy that meets minimum federal standards, (2) implement an early warning system for officer misconduct, and (3) participate in a national database of officer decertifications. These conditions are unambiguous and do not require state officers to enforce federal law. No state or local officer is commandeered.

The program is funded by reallocating \$500 million from existing DOJ discretionary accounts over five years. The DOJ Office of Justice Programs oversees the program, including review of applications and compliance. If a grantee fails to comply with conditions, funds may be withheld after notice and an administrative hearing. The program sunsets after five years, with a report to Congress on effectiveness. This Act takes effect 90 days after enactment.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	Reallocation from existing DOJ discretionary accounts (e.g., Byrne JAG program)
Funding Amount	\$500 million over 5 years
Sunset Years	5 years
Oversight Body	DOJ Office of Justice Programs
Enforcement Mechanism	Withholding of grant funds after notice and administrative hearing for noncompliance with conditions
Effective Date	90 days after enactment

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (Spending Clause)

- Tenth Amendment
- Fourteenth Amendment (conditions related to due process and equal protection)

Concerns with the measure as written:

- Original bill may have mandated state compliance or commandeered state officers, violating the Tenth Amendment.
- Conditions on federal funds must be clear, unambiguous, and freely accepted to avoid coercion under the Spending Clause.

WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

Honors Democratic priorities: police accountability through use-of-force standards, early warning systems, and decertification database. Honors Republican priorities: local control (voluntary participation), support for law enforcement through training funds, and no federal mandates on state officers.

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