

To the office of U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin

Re: S 5194 (119th Congress), Judicial Space and Facilities Management Effectiveness Act of 2026 · Latest action (2026-07-30): Read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works. (text: CR S4385-4390)
VFA SI Solution #216 · published 2026-08-04 · <https://www.valuesforamerica.com/solutions/216>
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Federal Courthouse Efficiency and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2025

The measure, as described from the official record: To improve the maintenance, alteration, and construction of U.S. courthouses to ensure they are safe, efficient, and adequate for the federal judiciary, while potentially reducing costs and improving oversight.

THE PROPOSAL

This Act amends title 28 of the United States Code to establish a Courthouse Modernization Fund with a total authorized appropriation of \$500 million per fiscal year, capped at \$2.5 billion over five years, to be used exclusively for the maintenance, alteration, and construction of federal courthouses. All projects funded under this Act shall undergo a lifecycle cost analysis and must be awarded through competitive bidding to the lowest responsible bidder, unless the Administrator of General Services certifies in writing that an exception is necessary for national security or emergency reasons. The Judicial Conference of the United States, in consultation with the Government Accountability Office, shall submit an annual report to Congress detailing expenditures, project status, cost savings, and any deviations from the competitive bidding requirement. This Act shall sunset on September 30, 2030, unless reauthorized by Congress. Funds not obligated within two years of appropriation shall revert to the general fund of the Treasury.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	General fund of the Treasury, authorized annually
Funding Amount	\$500 million per fiscal year, capped at \$2.5 billion total over five years
Sunset Years	5 years
Oversight Body	Joint oversight by the Judicial Conference of the United States and the Government Accountability Office
Enforcement Mechanism	Withholding of future appropriations if annual reports are not submitted or if funds are used in violation of competitive bidding requirements; funds revert to Treasury if unspent after two years
Effective Date	90 days after enactment

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (Necessary and Proper Clause)
- Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (Property Clause)

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

Democratic priorities: ensures adequate, safe, and accessible federal courthouses for the judiciary and public, with transparent oversight and lifecycle cost analysis to prevent waste.

Republican priorities: imposes strict fiscal discipline through a funding cap, competitive bidding requirement, and sunset provision, preventing indefinite spending and encouraging efficiency.

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