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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R.

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a pilot program to award grants to renovate and develop third spaces, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. MCIVER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish a pilot program to award grants to renovate and develop third spaces, and for other purposes.

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 “Revitalizing Equitable
5 Spaces to Transform Our Regional Environments and
6 Third Spaces Act of 2026” or the “RESTORE Third
7 Spaces Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Third spaces—social environments distinct
4 from home and work—are essential for democratic
5 participation, mental health, social trust, and cul-
6 tural vitality. They provide opportunities for resi-
7 dents to connect across lines of difference; reduce so-
8 cial isolation; and foster emotional well-being, civic
9 engagement, and mutual aid.

10 (2) Third spaces serve as engines for local eco-
11 nomic resilience and community wealth-building.
12 They act as vital incubators for local entrepreneur-
13 ship and innovation by providing low-barrier envi-
14 ronments for networking and collaboration. In urban
15 and rural settings, vibrant social hubs drive foot
16 traffic to surrounding businesses, increase property
17 values, and foster a distinct sense of place that at-
18 tracts sustainable long-term investment. By pro-
19 viding shared-use infrastructure, third spaces lower
20 the cost of entry for small businesses and coopera-
21 tive enterprises, turning social capital into tangible
22 economic opportunity.

23 (3) Decades of public disinvestment, segrega-
24 tion, urban renewal, and gentrification have dis-
25 proportionately dismantled shared civic spaces in un-
26 derserved and marginalized communities. The clo-

1 sure of community centers, parks, libraries, and
2 gathering places has weakened social infrastructure
3 that once supported local organizing, intergenera-
4 tional relationships, and cultural continuity.

5 (4) The widespread loss of accessible third
6 spaces in urban and rural areas has reduced oppor-
7 tunities for collective problem-solving, mutual aid,
8 and civic participation, thereby deepening loneliness,
9 disconnection, and mistrust.

10 (5) Social isolation and the decline of communal
11 life have created conditions conducive to online
12 radicalization and misinformation. When residents
13 lack shared public spaces for dialogue, creativity,
14 and belonging, they are more vulnerable to divisive
15 and extremist influences online.

16 (6) Third spaces also contribute to local eco-
17 nomic resilience. By fostering collaboration, cre-
18 ativity, and shared-use infrastructure, these spaces
19 can generate small business growth, cooperative en-
20 terprise, workforce development, and community
21 wealth-building while remaining open and accessible
22 to all.

23 (7) The Federal government has a vital role in
24 seeding and studying innovative third space models
25 that promote equity, inclusion, and sustainability. A

1 national pilot program can catalyze local leadership,
2 restore social cohesion, and demonstrate how inclu-
3 sive, low- or no-cost shared public life can flourish
4 in the twenty-first century.

5 **SEC. 3. PILOT GRANT PROGRAM TO RENOVATE AND DE-**
6 **VELOP THIRD SPACES.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Commerce,
8 in consultation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban
9 Development and the Secretary of Health and Human
10 Services, shall establish a pilot program to award grants
11 to eligible entities to renovate and develop third spaces.

12 (b) GRANT PRIORITIES.—In awarding grants under
13 subsection (a), the Secretary shall prioritize any eligible
14 entity that seeks to renovate or develop a third space
15 that—

16 (1) strengthens the local economy; and

17 (2) mitigates social isolation and the decline of
18 communal life.

19 (c) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—An application
20 submitted by an eligible entity for a grant under sub-
21 section (a) shall—

22 (1) include documentation of the history of the
23 community in which the third space to be renovated
24 or developed is located, including documentation of
25 historical inequities—

1 (A) within such community; and

2 (B) between such community and other
3 communities; and

4 (2) describe how such eligible entity, in ren-
5 ovating or developing a third space pursuant to such
6 grant, plans to—

7 (A) engage members of such community in
8 the design of such third space;

9 (B) ensure that such renovation or devel-
10 opment—

11 (i) benefits members of such commu-
12 nity; and

13 (ii) does not exacerbate such historical
14 inequities; and

15 (C) preserve local—

16 (i) culture;

17 (ii) history; and

18 (iii) identity.

19 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity may use a
20 grant under subsection (a) to—

21 (1) plan the renovation or development of a
22 third space, including through—

23 (A) community engagement initiatives;

24 (B) feasibility studies; and

25 (C) other pre-development activities; and

1 (2) pay construction costs associated with the
2 renovation or development of such third space.

3 (e) EQUITY AND HISTORICAL JUSTICE REQUIRE-
4 MENTS.—

5 (1) FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS.—Not less than
6 60 percent of any amounts awarded under sub-
7 section (a) for a fiscal year shall be awarded to eligi-
8 ble entities serving low-income and underserved com-
9 munities.

10 (2) ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES.—Each eligible en-
11 tity renovating or developing a third space pursuant
12 to a grant under subsection (a) shall establish a pol-
13 icy to ensure that such third space remains free or
14 low-cost to members of the public, except that an eli-
15 gible entity may charge a reasonable rent to a busi-
16 ness for the use of such third space.

17 (f) EXPIRATION OF PILOT.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
19 graph (2), the pilot program shall expire on the date
20 that is 3 years after the date of enactment of this
21 Act.

22 (2) OPTIONAL EXTENSION OF PILOT.—Not
23 later than 30 days before the expiration of the 3-
24 year period following the date of the enactment of

1 this Act, the Secretary may extend the pilot program
2 for an additional period of 2 years.

3 (g) REPORTS.—

4 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY REPORTS.—Not later
5 than 30 days after the date of enactment of this
6 Act, the Secretary shall establish reporting require-
7 ments for an eligible entity renovating or developing
8 a third space pursuant to a grant under subsection
9 (a), which shall—

10 (A) be responsive to the resources available
11 to such eligible entity to engage in such report-
12 ing; and

13 (B) include required reporting regarding—

14 (i) attendance rates at such third
15 spaces;

16 (ii) programs offered at such third
17 spaces; and

18 (iii) social, cultural, and direct and in-
19 direct economic impacts of such third
20 spaces.

21 (2) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 3
22 years after the expiration of the pilot program under
23 subsection (f), the Secretary shall submit to Con-
24 gress a report—

1 (A) summarizing metrics of success for
2 third spaces renovated and developed pursuant
3 to grants under subsection (a), including—

4 (i) attendance rates at such third
5 spaces;

6 (ii) the number of new businesses
7 formed in the communities in which such
8 third spaces are located;

9 (iii) the affordability of such third
10 spaces; and

11 (iv) survey-based measures of belong-
12 ing experienced by attendees at such third
13 spaces;

14 (B) assessing, based on the metrics estab-
15 lished in paragraph (1), the outcomes of the
16 pilot program, including, for third spaces ren-
17 ovated and developed pursuant to grants under
18 subsection (a)—

19 (i) social, cultural, and direct and in-
20 direct economic impacts of such third
21 spaces; and

22 (ii) the effectiveness of such third
23 spaces in—

24 (I) reducing social isolation; and

1 (II) supporting community life;

2 and

3 (C) providing recommendations regarding

4 the expansion of the pilot program.

5 (h) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE CAP.—Not more

6 than 5 percent of any funds appropriated to carry out this

7 section for a fiscal year may be expended for Federal ad-

8 ministration of the pilot program.

9 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There

10 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section

11 \$200,000,000.

12 (j) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

13 (1) The term “eligible entity” means—

14 (A) a local government;

15 (B) a nonprofit corporation;

16 (C) a Federally recognized Indian tribe;

17 (D) a Native Hawaiian organization;

18 (E) a public library;

19 (F) a community college; or

20 (G) a partnership including at least—

21 (i) one nonprofit corporation; and

22 (ii) one local government or an agency

23 thereof.

24 (2) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary

25 of Commerce.

1 (3) The term “third space”—

2 (A) means a space open to members of the
3 public that—

4 (i) does not function primarily as a
5 residence or a workplace; and

6 (ii) supports social, cultural, and eco-
7 nomic life; and

8 (B) may include—

9 (i) a community athletic field;

10 (ii) a community center;

11 (iii) a library;

12 (iv) a cultural center;

13 (v) a makerspace.

14 (vi) a nonprofit incubator;

15 (vii) a park;

16 (viii) a playground

17 (ix) a public market;

18 (x) a schoolyard with a shared use
19 agreement;

20 (xi) a small business concern (as de-
21 scribed in section 3 of the Small Business
22 Act (15 U.S.C. 632)); and

23 (xii) a combination of two or more
24 spaces listed in clauses (i) through (xi).

1 (4) The term “underserved community” means
2 a community—

3 (A) that is subject to one or more of the
4 economic distress criteria under section
5 301.3(a)(1) of title 13, Code of Federal Regula-
6 tions (or any successor regulation); and

7 (B) that—

8 (i) is located in a rural area; or

9 (ii) has experienced—

10 (I) poverty;

11 (II) disinvestment;

12 (III) racial segregation;

13 (IV) economic segregation; or

14 (V) the loss of third spaces due

15 to—

16 (aa) redevelopment;

17 (bb) gentrification; or

18 (cc) the construction of new

19 infrastructure.