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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R.

To establish the President’s Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture,  
and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BANKS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee  
on \_\_\_\_\_

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# A BILL

To establish the President’s Council on Improving Federal  
Civic Architecture, 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 “Beautifying Federal  
5 Civic Architecture Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.**

7 It is the policy of the United States that—

8 (1) applicable Federal public buildings should—

9 (A) uplift and beautify public spaces;

1 (B) inspire the human spirit;

2 (C) ennoble the United States;

3 (D) command respect from the general  
4 public;

5 (E) be visually identifiable as civic build-  
6 ings; and

7 (F) as appropriate, respect regional archi-  
8 tectural heritage;

9 (2) architecture, with particular regard for tra-  
10 ditional and classical architecture, that meets the  
11 criteria described in paragraph (1) is the preferred  
12 architecture for applicable Federal public buildings;

13 (3) in the District of Columbia, classical archi-  
14 tecture is the preferred and default architecture for  
15 Federal public buildings absent exceptional factors  
16 necessitating another style of architecture;

17 (4) where the architecture of applicable Federal  
18 public buildings diverges from the preferred architec-  
19 ture, great care and consideration shall be taken to  
20 choose a design that—

21 (A) commands respect from the general  
22 public; and

23 (B) clearly conveys to the general public  
24 the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of

1 the system of self-government of the United  
2 States;

3 (5) when renovating, reducing, or expanding ap-  
4 plicable Federal public buildings that do not meet  
5 the criteria described in paragraph (1), the feasi-  
6 bility and potential expense of building redesign to  
7 meet those criteria should be examined;

8 (6) where feasible and economical, a redesign  
9 described in paragraph (5) should be given substan-  
10 tial consideration, especially with respect to the exte-  
11 rior of the applicable Federal building; and

12 (7) the Administration should seek input from  
13 future users of applicable Federal public buildings  
14 and the general public in the community where those  
15 buildings will be located before selecting an architec-  
16 tural firm or design style and give the general  
17 public's input substantial consideration.

18 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

19 In this Act:

20 (1) 2023 DOLLARS.—The term “2023 dollars”  
21 means dollars adjusted for inflation using, with  
22 2023 as the base year, the Gross Domestic Product  
23 price deflator of the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

24 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administra-  
25 tion” means the General Services Administration.

1           (3) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-  
2           trator” means the Administrator of General Serv-  
3           ices.

4           (4) APPLICABLE FEDERAL PUBLIC BUILDING.—

5           (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “applicable  
6           Federal public building” means—

7                   (i) any Federal courthouse;

8                   (ii) any Federal agency headquarters;

9                   (iii) any public building in the District  
10           of Columbia; and

11                   (iv) any other public building the cost  
12           or expected cost to design, build, and finish  
13           of which is more than \$50,000,000 in  
14           2023 dollars.

15           (B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term “applicable  
16           Federal public building” does not include an in-  
17           frastructure project or land port of entry.

18           (5) BRUTALIST.—The term “Brutalist” means  
19           the style of architecture that grew out of the early  
20           20th-century modernist movement that is character-  
21           ized by a massive and block-like appearance with a  
22           rigid geometric style and large-scale use of exposed  
23           poured concrete.

24           (6) CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “classical ar-  
2 chitecture” means the architectural tradition—

3 (i) derived from the forms, principles,  
4 and vocabulary of the architecture of  
5 Greek and Roman antiquity; and

6 (ii) later developed and expanded on  
7 by—

8 (I) Renaissance architects, in-  
9 cluding Alberti, Brunelleschi, Michel-  
10 angelo, and Palladio;

11 (II) Enlightenment masters, in-  
12 cluding Robert Adam, John Soane,  
13 and Christopher Wren;

14 (III) 19th Century architects, in-  
15 cluding Benjamin Henry Latrobe,  
16 Robert Mills, Louise Blanchard Be-  
17 thune, and Thomas U. Walter; and

18 (IV) 20th Century practitioners,  
19 including Julian Abele, Daniel  
20 Burnham, Charles F. McKim, Robert  
21 Robinson Taylor, John Russell Pope,  
22 Julia Morgan, and the firm of Delano  
23 and Aldrich.

24 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Classical ar-  
25 chitecture” includes styles such as Neoclassical,

1 Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Beaux-Arts,  
2 and Art Deco.

3 (7) COUNCIL.—The term “Council” means the  
4 President’s Council on Improving Federal Civic Ar-  
5 chitecture established by section 4(a).

6 (8) DECONSTRUCTIVIST.—The term  
7 “Deconstructivist” means the style of architecture—

8 (A) generally known as  
9 “deconstructivism”; and

10 (B) that emerged during the late 1980s  
11 that subverts the traditional values of architec-  
12 ture through features such as fragmentation,  
13 disorder, discontinuity, distortion, skewed geom-  
14 etry, and the appearance of instability.

15 (9) GENERAL PUBLIC.—The term “general  
16 public” means members of the public who are not—

17 (A) artists, architects, engineers, art or ar-  
18 chitecture critics, instructors or professors of  
19 art or architecture, or members of the building  
20 industry; or

21 (B) affiliated with any interest group,  
22 trade association, or any other organization  
23 whose membership is financially affected by de-  
24 cisions involving the design, construction, or re-  
25 modeling of applicable Federal public buildings.

1           (10) OFFICER.—The term “officer” has the  
2 meaning given such term in section 2104 of title 5,  
3 United States Code.

4           (11) PREFERRED ARCHITECTURE.—The term  
5 “preferred architecture” means the architecture de-  
6 scribed in section 2(2).

7           (12) PUBLIC BUILDING.—The term “public  
8 building” has the meaning given such term in sec-  
9 tion 3301(a) of title 40, United States Code.

10          (13) TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE.—The term  
11 “traditional architecture” includes—

12                   (A) classical architecture; and

13                   (B) the historic humanistic architecture,  
14 including Gothic, Romanesque, Pueblo Revival,  
15 Spanish Colonial, and other Mediterranean  
16 styles of architecture historically rooted in var-  
17 ious regions of America.

18 **SEC. 4. PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL ON IMPROVING FEDERAL**  
19 **CIVIC ARCHITECTURE.**

20          (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the  
21 President’s Council on Improving Federal Civic Architec-  
22 ture.

23          (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

24                   (1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be com-  
25 posed of—

1 (A) the chair of the Commission of Fine  
2 Arts;

3 (B) all prior living chairs of the Commis-  
4 sion of Fine Arts who elect to serve;

5 (C) the Secretary of the Commission of  
6 Fine Arts;

7 (D) the Architect of the Capitol;

8 (E) the Commissioner of the Public Build-  
9 ing Service of the Administration; and

10 (F) the Chief Architect of the Administra-  
11 tion.

12 (2) CHAIR.—

13 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be  
14 chaired by an individual described in paragraph  
15 (1)(A), who shall be designated by the Presi-  
16 dent.

17 (B) VICE CHAIR; SUBCOMMITTEES.—The  
18 Chair of the Council may—

19 (i) designate a Vice Chair; and

20 (ii) establish subcommittees.

21 (3) COMPENSATION.—

22 (A) NO COMPENSATION.—Except as pro-  
23 vided in subparagraph (B), a member of the  
24 Council shall receive no compensation as a re-  
25 sult of serving on the Council.



1           (B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the  
2           Council shall be allowed travel expenses, includ-  
3           ing per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates au-  
4           thorized for employees of agencies under sub-  
5           chapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States  
6           Code, while away from their homes or regular  
7           places of business in the performance of serv-  
8           ices for the Council.

9           (c) DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL.—The Council shall—  
10           (1) not later than 1 year after the date of en-  
11           actment of this Act, submit to the Administrator a  
12           report recommending updates to policies and proce-  
13           dures of the Administration that—

14           (A) incorporates the policy of the United  
15           States described in section 2, including how the  
16           recommended updates to policies and proce-  
17           dures will accomplish such policy; and

18           (B) advances the purposes of this Act, in-  
19           cluding how those recommendations accomplish  
20           those purposes; and

21           (2) recommend to the Administrator changes to  
22           Administration policies for situations in which the  
23           Administration participates in a design selection  
24           pursuant to chapter 89 of title 40, United States  
25           Code (commonly known as the “Commemorative

1 Works Act’), in furtherance of the purposes of this  
2 Act and consistent with applicable law.

3 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT; STAFF.—

4 (1) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—On request of  
5 the Council, the Administrator shall provide funding  
6 and administrative and technical support to the  
7 Council.

8 (2) STAFF.—The Administrator—

9 (A) shall direct employees of the Adminis-  
10 tration to provide any relevant information the  
11 Council requests; and

12 (B) may detail those employees to aid in  
13 the work of the Council, on request of the  
14 Council.

15 (e) FACA FUNCTIONS.—Any functions of the Presi-  
16 dent under chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code, ex-  
17 cept for the reporting to Congress under section 1005(b)  
18 of that title, shall be performed by the Administrator in  
19 accordance with guidelines and procedures established by  
20 the Administrator.

21 (f) TERMINATION.—The Council shall terminate on  
22 the date that is 5 years after the date on which the Council  
23 first meets.

1 **SEC. 5. GSA REQUIREMENTS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall adhere to  
3 the policy of the United States described in section 2.

4 (b) NOTIFICATION.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—If the Administrator pro-  
6 poses to approve a design for a new applicable Fed-  
7 eral public building that diverges from the preferred  
8 architecture, including Brutalist or Deconstructivist  
9 architecture or any design derived from or related to  
10 those styles of architecture, the Administrator shall  
11 submit to the Assistant to the President for Domes-  
12 tic Policy, the Committee on Homeland Security and  
13 Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and the Com-  
14 mittee on Oversight and Accountability of the House  
15 of Representatives not later than 30 days before the  
16 date on which the Administrator could reject the de-  
17 sign without incurring substantial expenditures a no-  
18 tification in accordance with paragraph (2).

19 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—A notification submitted  
20 under paragraph (1) shall describe the reasons the  
21 Administrator proposes to approve a design de-  
22 scribed in that paragraph, including—

23 (A) a detailed explanation of why the Ad-  
24 ministrator believes selecting the design is justi-  
25 fied, with particular focus on whether the de-  
26 sign is as beautiful and reflective of the dignity,

1 enterprise, vigor, and stability of the system of  
2 self-government in the United States as alter-  
3 native designs of comparable cost using pre-  
4 ferred architecture;

5 (B) the total expected cost of adopting the  
6 proposed design, including estimated mainte-  
7 nance and replacement costs throughout the ex-  
8 pected lifecycle of the design; and

9 (C)(i) a description of the designs using  
10 preferred architecture seriously considered for  
11 the project; and

12 (ii) the total expected cost of adopting  
13 those designs, including estimated mainte-  
14 nance and replacement costs throughout  
15 the expected lifecycles of those designs.

16 **SEC. 6. SAVINGS PROVISION.**

17 Nothing in this Act—

18 (1) impairs or otherwise affects—

19 (A) the authority granted by law to an ex-  
20 ecutive department or agency, or the head  
21 thereof; or

22 (B) the functions of the Director of the Of-  
23 fice of Management and Budget relating to  
24 budgetary, administrative, or legislative pro-  
25 posals; or

1           (2) creates any right or benefit, substantive or  
2           procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any  
3           party against—

4                   (A) the United States, including—

5                           (i) any department, agency, or entity  
6                           of the United States; or

7                           (ii) any officer, employee, or agent of  
8                           the United States; or

9                   (B) any other person.

10 **SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

11           On an annual basis, the Administrator shall submit  
12 to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the  
13 House of Representatives and the Committee on Home-  
14 land Security and Governmental Affairs a report about the  
15 promulgation of this Act, detailing adherence to the policy  
16 of the United States described in section 2.