118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S.

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Rubio introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on ____________

A BILL

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

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Beautifying Federal Civic Architecture Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES.

It is the policy of the United States that—

(1) applicable Federal public buildings should—

(A) uplift and beautify public spaces;

(B) inspire the human spirit;
(C) ennoble the United States;

(D) command respect from the general public;

(E) be visually identifiable as civic buildings; and

(F) as appropriate, respect regional architectural heritage;

(2) architecture, with particular regard for traditional and classical architecture, that meets the criteria described in paragraph (1) is the preferred architecture for applicable Federal public buildings;

(3) in the District of Columbia, classical architecture is the preferred and default architecture for Federal public buildings absent exceptional factors necessitating another style of architecture;

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

(A) commands respect from the general public; and

(B) clearly conveys to the general public the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the system of self-government of the United States;
(5) when renovating, reducing, or expanding applicable Federal public buildings that do not meet the criteria described in paragraphs (1), (2), or (3), the feasibility and potential expense of building redesign to meet those criteria should be examined;

(6) where feasible and economical, a redesign described in paragraph (5) should be given substantial consideration, especially with respect to the exterior of the applicable Federal building; and

(7)(A) the Administration should seek input from future users of applicable Federal public buildings and the general public in the community where those buildings will be located; and

(B) give the input received from the general public under subparagraph (A) substantial consideration before selecting an architectural firm or design style for those buildings.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

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

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administration” means the General Services Administration.
(3) Administrator.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of General Services.

(4) Applicable Federal Public Building.—

(A) In General.—The term “applicable Federal public building” means—

(i) any Federal courthouse;

(ii) any Federal agency headquarters;

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

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

(B) Exclusions.—The term “applicable Federal public building” does not include an infrastructure project or land port of entry.

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

(6) Classical Architecture.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “classical architecture” means the architectural tradition—

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

(ii) later developed and expanded on by—

(I) Renaissance architects, including Alberti, Brunelleschi, Michelangelo, and Palladio;

(II) Enlightenment masters, including Robert Adam, John Soane, and Christopher Wren;

(III) 19th Century architects, including Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Louise Blanchard Bethune, Robert Mills, and Thomas U. Walter; and

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

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Classical architecture” includes styles such as Neoclassical,
Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Beaux-Arts,
and Art Deco.

(7) COUNCIL.—The term “Council” means the
Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture es-
tablished by section 4(a).

(8) DECONSTRUCTIVIST.—The term
“Deconstructivist” means the style of architecture—
(A) generally known as
“deconstructivism”; and

(B) that subverts the traditional values of
architecture through features such as frag-
mentation, disorder, discontinuity, distortion,
skewed geometry, and the appearance of insta-

(9) GENERAL PUBLIC.—The term “general
public” means members of the public who are not—
(A) artists, architects, engineers, art or ar-
chitecture critics, instructors or professors of
art or architecture, or members of the building
industry; or

(B) affiliated with any interest group,
trade association, or any other organization
whose membership is financially affected by de-
cisions involving the design, construction, or re-
modeling of public buildings.
(10) **OFFICER.**—The term “officer” has the meaning given the term in section 2104 of title 5, United States Code.

(11) **PREFERRED ARCHITECTURE.**—The term “preferred architecture” means the architecture described in section 2(2).

(12) **PUBLIC BUILDING.**—The term “public building” has the meaning given the term in section 3301(a) of title 40, United States Code.

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

(A) classical architecture; and

(B) the historic humanistic architecture, including Gothic, Italianate, Renaissance Revival, Romanesque, Pueblo Revival, Spanish Colonial, and other styles of architecture historically rooted in various regions of the United States.

**SEC. 4. COUNCIL ON IMPROVING FEDERAL CIVIC ARCHITECTURE.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established the Council on Improving Federal Civic Architecture.

(b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be composed of—
(A) the Chair of the Commission of Fine Arts serving in that position on the date of enactment of this Act;

(B) any individual who served as Chair of the Commission of Fine Arts before the date of enactment of this Act, if that individual chooses to serve on the Council;

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

(D) the Architect of the Capitol (or a designee);

(E) the Commissioner of the Public Building Service of the Administration;

(F) the Chief Architect of the Administration; and

(G) not more than 10 individuals, to be evenly appointed by the Chair of the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, from among citizens of the United States that are not employees or officers of the Federal Government.

(2) CHAIR.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be chaired by an individual described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (G) of paragraph (1), who shall be elected by the Council.

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

(i) designate a Vice Chair; and

(ii) establish subcommittees.

(3) CERTAIN MEMBERS.—Members of the Council described in paragraph (1)(G)—

(A) shall serve on the Council until the date on which the Council terminates under subsection (e); and

(B) shall not be removed except for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or malfeasance.

(4) COMPENSATION.—

(A) NO COMPENSATION.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), a member of the Council shall receive no compensation as a result of serving on the Council.

(B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Council shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States
Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Council.

(c) DUTIES OF COUNCIL.—The Council shall—

(1) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until the date on which the Council terminates under subsection (e), submit to the Administrator a report recommending updates to policies, procedures, or practices of the Administration that—

(A)(i) identifies any policies, procedures, or practices of the Administration that do not adhere to sections 2 and 5; and

(ii) recommends updates to those policies, procedures, and practices to align those policies, procedures, and practices with those sections;

(B) analyzes the design for any new applicable Federal public building and, if necessary, recommends changes so that the applicable Federal public building adheres to sections 2 and 5; and

(C) analyzes all applicable Federal public buildings, including the architectural styles of those buildings, and recommends redesigns, if any, to align those buildings with section 2; and
(2) recommend to the Administrator changes to Administration policies for situations in which the Administration participates in a design selection pursuant to chapter 89 of title 40, United States Code (commonly known as the “Commemorative Works Act”), in furtherance of the purposes of this Act and consistent with applicable law.

(d) APPLICABILITY.—Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Federal Advisory Committee Act”), shall apply to the Council.

(e) TERMINATION.—The Council shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date on which the Council holds the initial meeting of the Council.

SEC. 5. GSA REQUIREMENTS.

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

(b) NOTIFICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Administrator proposes to approve a design for a new applicable Federal public building that diverges from the preferred architecture, including Brutalist or Deconstructivist architecture or any design derived from or related to those styles of architecture, the Administrator shall submit to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and the appropriate committees of Con-
gress, not later than 30 days before the date on which the Administrator could reject the design without incurring substantial expenditures, a notification in accordance with paragraph (2).

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A notification submitted under paragraph (1) shall describe the reasons the Administrator proposes to approve a design described in that paragraph, including—

(A) a detailed explanation of why the Administrator believes selecting the design is justified, with particular focus on whether the design is as beautiful and reflective of the dignity, enterprise, vigor, and stability of the system of self-government in the United States as alternative designs of comparable cost using preferred architecture;

(B) the total expected cost of adopting the proposed design, including estimated maintenance and replacement costs throughout the expected lifecycle of the design;

(C)(i) a description of the designs using preferred architecture seriously considered for the project, including copies of blueprints or renderings of those designs that have been produced; and
(ii) the total expected cost of adopting those designs, including estimated maintenance and replacement costs throughout the expected lifecycles of those designs; and

(D) the steps that the Administrator took to solicit and consider the views of the general public about the design.

SEC. 6. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

Not less frequently than once annually, the Administrator shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that includes—

(1) a detailed explanation of the steps the Administrator has taken to adhere to sections 2 and 5;

(2) a detailed explanation of the steps the Administrator has taken to adopt recommendations made by the Council in a report submitted under section 4(c)(1); and

(3) a list of all applicable Federal public buildings that the Federal Government owns and a description of the architectural style of those buildings.