

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 256

To require the President to publish a statement of reasons for pardons,
and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 25, 2025

Mr. BLUMENTHAL introduced the following bill; which was read twice and
referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To require the President to publish a statement of reasons
for pardons, 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 “Pardon Transparency
5 and Accountability Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY.—The term “execu-
9 tive clemency”—

1 (A) means any exercise by the President of
 2 the power to grant reprieves or pardons under
 3 clause 1 of section 2 of article II of the Con-
 4 stitution of the United States; and

5 (B) includes any pardon, commutation, re-
 6 prieve, or remission of a fine.

7 (2) VICTIM.—The term “victim” has the mean-
 8 ing given the term in section 503(e) of the Victims’
 9 Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C.
 10 20141(e)).

11 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR PARDONS.**

12 On the date on which any grant of executive clemency
 13 is made, the President shall publish in the Federal Reg-
 14 ister and on the official website of the President a written
 15 explanation of the reasons for granting such executive
 16 clemency.

17 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE PARDON ATTORNEY.**

18 (a) JUSTICE IMPACT STATEMENT.—The Pardon At-
 19 torney shall, as soon as the Pardon Attorney becomes
 20 aware of any potential grant of executive clemency being
 21 considered by the President, begin preparing a Justice Im-
 22 pact Statement, which shall be made available to the
 23 President and Congress as soon as practicable but not
 24 later than 30 days after the date on which the Pardon
 25 Attorney becomes so aware, and which shall include—

1 (1) a description of the efforts of the Pardon
2 Attorney—

3 (A) to contact victims as required under
4 subsection (c)(1); and

5 (B) to make each determination required
6 under paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (c);
7 and

8 (2) any written statement submitted by a victim
9 under subsection (c)(1).

10 (b) NOTIFICATION.—Any employee of the Depart-
11 ment of Justice or Executive Office of the President who
12 learns that the President is considering a grant of execu-
13 tive clemency shall immediately inform the Pardon Attor-
14 ney of such consideration.

15 (c) DETERMINATIONS REQUIRED.—In the prepara-
16 tion of any Justice Impact Statement under subsection
17 (a), the Pardon Attorney shall make all reasonable efforts
18 to—

19 (1) inform the victims of any crime committed
20 by the person receiving a grant of executive clem-
21 ency that they may submit written statements for
22 inclusion in the Justice Impact Statement prepared
23 by the Pardon Attorney;

1 (2) determine the opinions of the victims de-
 2 scribed in paragraph (1) regarding the potential
 3 grant of executive clemency; and

4 (3) determine the opinions of the Attorney Gen-
 5 eral, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and other
 6 Federal, State, local, and Tribal law enforcement of-
 7 ficials, as appropriate, as to the potential impact of
 8 the grant of executive clemency on the success of
 9 any ongoing investigation or prosecution.

10 (d) **JUSTICE IMPACT STATEMENT COMPLETION.**—

11 The Justice Impact Statement required under subsection

12 (a) shall be completed and submitted even if submitted
 13 after executive clemency is granted.

14 **SEC. 5. PARDON LOBBYING DISCLOSURE.**

15 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—Section 3 of the Lobbying Dislo-
 16 sure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1602) is amended—

17 (1) in paragraph (8)—

18 (A) in subparagraph (A)—

19 (i) in clause (iii), by striking “or”
 20 after the semicolon;

21 (ii) in clause (iv), by striking the pe-
 22 riod and inserting “; or”; and

23 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
 24 lowing:

1 “(v) the issuance of a grant of execu-
 2 tive clemency, as defined in section 2 of
 3 the Pardon Transparency and Account-
 4 ability Act of 2025, in the form of a par-
 5 don, commutation of sentence, reprieve, or
 6 remission of fine.”; and

7 (B) in subparagraph (B)(xii), by striking
 8 “made to” and inserting “except as provided in
 9 subparagraph (A)(v), made to”; and

10 (2) in paragraph (10), by inserting after the
 11 word “period” the following: “, or any individual
 12 who is employed or retained by a client for financial
 13 or other compensation for services that include not
 14 fewer than 1 lobbying contact relating to a potential
 15 grant of executive clemency, as defined in section 2
 16 of the Pardon Transparency and Accountability Act
 17 of 2025, regardless of the percent of the services
 18 provided by the individual to that client that consist
 19 of lobbying activities.”

20 (b) REGISTRATION OF LOBBYISTS.—Section 4 of the
 21 Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1603) is
 22 amended by adding at the end the following:

23 “(e) REGISTRATION RELATING TO GRANTS OF EXEC-
 24 UTIVE CLEMENCY.—Not later than 2 days after the date
 25 on which a lobbyist first makes a lobbying contact per-

1 taining to a potential grant of executive clemency, as de-
 2 fined in section 2 of the Pardon Transparency and Ac-
 3 countability Act of 2025, or is employed or retained to
 4 make a lobbying contact pertaining to a potential grant
 5 of executive clemency, as so defined in that Act, whichever
 6 is earlier, such lobbyist (or the organization employing
 7 such lobbyist) shall register with the Secretary of the Sen-
 8 ate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives in ac-
 9 cordance with the requirements of this section, regardless
 10 of the total income or expenses related to such lobbying
 11 activities.”.

12 (c) REPORTS BY REGISTERED LOBBYISTS.—Section
 13 5 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1604)
 14 is amended by adding at the end the following:

15 “(f) LOBBYING CONTACTS RELATING TO EXECUTIVE
 16 CLEMENCY.—Not later than 2 days after a lobbying con-
 17 tact pertaining to a potential grant of executive clemency,
 18 as defined in section 2 of the Pardon Transparency and
 19 Accountability Act of 2025, each registrant shall file a re-
 20 port with the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of
 21 the House of Representatives containing the information
 22 described in subsection (b) relating to the lobbying contact
 23 pertaining to the potential grant of executive clemency.”.

24 **SEC. 6. STUDIES AND REPORTS.**

25 (a) STUDIES.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning on the date that
2 is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act,
3 and every other year thereafter, the Pardon Attor-
4 ney shall conduct a study on the extent of compli-
5 ance or noncompliance with this Act.

6 (2) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
7 April 1 of each year following the completion of the
8 study required under subsection, the Pardon Attor-
9 ney shall submit to Congress a report containing the
10 findings of the study and any recommendations to
11 improve compliance with this Act.

12 **SEC. 7. SEVERABILITY.**

13 If any provision of this Act, an amendment made by
14 this Act, or the application of such a provision or amend-
15 ment to any particular person or circumstance is held in-
16 valid, the remaining provisions of this Act and the amend-
17 ments made by this Act, and the application of such re-
18 maining provisions and amendments to any other person
19 or circumstance, shall not be affected thereby.

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