

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 3454

To authorize the Secretary of Defense to establish one or more National Security and Defense Artificial Intelligence Institutes, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 11, 2025

Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. CRUZ) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Defense to establish one or more National Security and Defense Artificial Intelligence Institutes, 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 “Growing University  
5 Artificial Intelligence Research for Defense Act of 2025”  
6 or the “GUARD Act of 2025”.

7 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE ARTIFICIAL IN-**  
8 **TELLIGENCE INSTITUTE.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense may es-  
10 tablish one or more National Security and Defense Artifi-

1 cial Intelligence Institutes (referred to in this section as  
2 “Institutes”) at eligible host institutions.

3 (b) INSTITUTE DESCRIBED.—A National Security  
4 and Defense Artificial Intelligence Institute referred to in  
5 subsection (a) is an artificial intelligence research institute  
6 that—

7 (1) is focused on a cross-cutting challenge or  
8 foundational science for artificial intelligence sys-  
9 tems in the national security and defense sector;

10 (2) establishes partnerships among public and  
11 private organizations, including, as appropriate,  
12 Federal agencies, institutions of higher education,  
13 including community colleges, nonprofit research or-  
14 ganizations, Federal laboratories, State, local, and  
15 Tribal governments, and industry, including the De-  
16 fense Industrial Base and startup companies;

17 (3) has the potential to create an innovation  
18 ecosystem, or enhance existing ecosystems, to trans-  
19 late Institute research into applications and products  
20 used to enhance national security and defense capa-  
21 bilities;

22 (4) supports interdisciplinary research and de-  
23 velopment across multiple institutions of higher edu-  
24 cation and organizations; and

1           (5) supports workforce development in artificial  
2 intelligence related disciplines in the United States.

3           (c) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED.—

4           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense  
5 may award financial assistance to an eligible host in-  
6 stitution, or consortia thereof, to establish and sup-  
7 port one or more Institutes.

8           (2) USE OF FUNDS.—Financial assistance  
9 awarded under paragraph (1) may be used by an In-  
10 stitute for—

11           (A) managing and making available to re-  
12 searchers accessible, curated, standardized, se-  
13 cure, and privacy protected data sets from the  
14 public and private sectors for the purposes of  
15 training and testing artificial intelligence sys-  
16 tems and for research using artificial intel-  
17 ligence systems with regard to national security  
18 and defense;

19           (B) developing and managing testbeds for  
20 artificial intelligence systems, including sector-  
21 specific test beds, designed to enable users to  
22 evaluate artificial intelligence systems prior to  
23 deployment;

24           (C) conducting research and education ac-  
25 tivities involving artificial intelligence systems

1 to solve challenges with national security impli-  
2 cations;

3 (D) providing or brokering access to com-  
4 puting resources, networking, and data facilities  
5 for artificial intelligence research and develop-  
6 ment relevant to the Institute's research goals;

7 (E) providing technical assistance to users,  
8 including software engineering support, for arti-  
9 ficial intelligence research and development rel-  
10 evant to the Institute's research goals;

11 (F) engaging in outreach and engagement  
12 to broaden participation in artificial intelligence  
13 research and the artificial intelligence work-  
14 force; and

15 (G) such other activities as may deter-  
16 mined by the Secretary of Defense.

17 (3) DURATION.—Financial assistance under  
18 paragraph (1) shall be awarded for a five-year pe-  
19 riod, and may be renewed for not more than one ad-  
20 ditional five-year period.

21 (4) APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSIST-  
22 ANCE.—An eligible host institution or consortia  
23 thereof seeking financial assistance under paragraph  
24 (1) shall submit to the Secretary of Defense an ap-  
25 plication at such time, in such manner, and con-

1       taining such information as the Secretary may re-  
2       quire.

3           (5) COMPETITIVE, MERIT REVIEW.—In award-  
4       ing financial assistance under paragraph (1), the  
5       Secretary of Defense shall use a competitive, merit-  
6       based review process.

7           (6) COLLABORATION.—In awarding financial  
8       assistance under paragraph (1), the Secretary of De-  
9       fense may collaborate with other departments and  
10      agencies of the Federal Government with missions  
11      that relate to or have the potential to be affected by  
12      the national security implications of artificial intel-  
13      ligence systems.

14          (7) LIMITATION.—No financial assistance au-  
15      thorized in this section shall be awarded to an entity  
16      outside of the United States. All recipients of finan-  
17      cial assistance under this section, including sub-  
18      grantees, shall be based in the United States and  
19      shall meet such other eligibility criteria as may be  
20      established by the Secretary of Defense.

21      (d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “eligible  
22      host institution” means—

23           (1) an institution of higher education (as de-  
24      fined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of  
25      1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)) in the United States that

1       conducts research sponsored by the Department of  
2       Defense; or

3               (2) a senior military college (as defined in sec-  
4       tion 2111a(f) of title 10, United States Code).

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