



## **H.R. 302, the Energy Cybersecurity University Leadership Act of 2023**

### **Background and Need**

Cyberattacks on the U.S. power grid present a major and constantly evolving threat to U.S. national security, energy independence, and global competitiveness. Current methodology for securing our power grid from cyberattacks focuses primarily on retroactively mitigating vulnerabilities in energy-related critical infrastructure after an intrusion occurs. This practice is inefficient, ineffective, and costly. There is a need to comprehensively integrate cybersecurity considerations into the research and development of energy infrastructure to enhance and maintain its security, resilience, and reliability.

This approach requires a highly skilled workforce with energy-specific cybersecurity expertise and familiarity with associated research, development, and demonstration needs. The Department of Energy (DOE) is the Sector Risk Management Agency for the Energy Sector, which includes planning for and countering cybersecurity threats. Support for dedicated scholarships at DOE for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers studying energy-specific cybersecurity disciplines would play a key role in addressing these workforce needs.

### **Summary of Major Provisions**

H.R. 302, as amended, directs the Secretary of Energy to provide financial assistance for scholarships, fellowships, and research and development projects at various institutions of higher education to support graduate students and postdoctoral researchers pursuing coursework at the intersection of cybersecurity and energy infrastructure. Awardees under this program would also be provided with research traineeships at DOE National Laboratories and utilities to gain practical, hands-on experience with developing and testing new tools and technologies.

### **Legislative History**

A similar version of this bill previously passed the House on July 27, 2022, on suspension, and previously passed through committee on May 17, 2022.

### **Cost Information**

CBO estimates that this legislation will have no effect on direct spending or revenues.