

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 3984

To establish a National Clearinghouse for Character Education.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 15, 2000

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## A BILL

To establish a National Clearinghouse for Character Education.

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 “Commitment to Kids  
5 and Character Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) It is vitally important for school systems to  
9 ensure that their students understand, care about,  
10 and act upon ethical values, such as honesty, fair-  
11 ness, responsibility, and respect for self and others.

1           (2) Schools adopting intentional comprehensive  
2 approaches to character education are developing  
3 moral and ethical values in their students and pro-  
4 moting a more compassionate and responsible soci-  
5 ety. Students are less prone to violence and sub-  
6 stance abuse, and are more community minded, and  
7 often more committed and successful academically  
8 when character education programs have been imple-  
9 mented.

10           (3) An increasing number of schools, districts,  
11 and States are taking steps to incorporate character  
12 education into their classrooms and school cultures.  
13 They need information on best practices, effective  
14 curricula, quality programs, criteria for assessing  
15 programs, and cost-effective opportunities to net-  
16 work nationally with each other, especially through  
17 electronic means.

18 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.**

19           (a) GRANT.—The Secretary is authorized to provide  
20 a grant to an organization that is described in section  
21 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and ex-  
22 empt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code (referred  
23 to in this Act as the “Organization”) which has—

24           (1) demonstrated expertise on a National level  
25 in providing comprehensive and objective informa-

1       tion services and assistance regarding character edu-  
2       cation policies, programs, models of curricula, re-  
3       search and assessment;

4               (2) a membership representative of individuals  
5       and groups committed to providing character edu-  
6       cation; and

7               (3) demonstrated a commitment to furthering  
8       the implementation of quality practices in the imple-  
9       mentation of character education programs.

10       (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTER.—The Organiza-  
11      tion shall establish and support the operation of a Na-  
12      tional Clearinghouse for Character Education (referred to  
13      in this Act as the “Clearinghouse”) to synthesize and dis-  
14      seminate information about character education and re-  
15      lated programs. The Organization, through the Clearing-  
16      house, shall develop programs that incorporate the fol-  
17      lowing elements of character:

18               (1) Caring.

19               (2) Civic virtue and citizenship.

20               (3) Justice and fairness.

21               (4) Respect.

22               (5) Responsibility.

23               (6) Honesty.

24               (7) Any other elements considered appropriate  
25      by the Organization.

1 **SEC. 4. FUNCTIONS.**

2 The Organization, through the Clearinghouse, shall—

3 (1) develop a searchable database that contains  
4 background and contact information on the leading  
5 character education groups, curricula, books, pro-  
6 grams, and videos;

7 (2) make available information on best prac-  
8 tices;

9 (3) make available models of professional devel-  
10 opment in character education;

11 (4) make available research findings on the ef-  
12 fectiveness of various approaches and programs;

13 (5) make available information on available as-  
14 sessment tools and instruments;

15 (6) make available information on leading char-  
16 acter education groups nationally and the services  
17 they provide;

18 (7) collect and make available information re-  
19 garding how character education can be integrated  
20 into State and national content and performance  
21 standards for the various academic subjects and in-  
22 corporated in other educational reform efforts;

23 (8) make available a checklist of criteria for  
24 users to assess the appropriateness of particular  
25 character education curricula to their needs;

1           (9) provide a network of State sponsored  
2 websites on character education;

3           (10) make available any other information that  
4 may be helpful to character educators in imple-  
5 menting programs; and

6           (11) provide telephone assistance and a toll-free  
7 access number.

8 **SEC. 5. REPORT.**

9           The Organization shall submit to the Secretary an  
10 annual report that—

11           (1) specifies the number of people who request  
12 information from the Clearinghouse and the types of  
13 information requested; and

14           (2) identifies unmet and future information  
15 needs in the field of character education.

16 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

17           There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
18 this Act \$500,000 for fiscal year 2001 and such sums as  
19 may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

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