

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1893

To direct the Secretary of Education to conduct a study of the relative value of General Equivalency Diplomas and a review of policies and procedures to determine how the Department of Education can better serve the Nation's educational needs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 17, 2001

Mrs. CLAYTON (for herself and Ms. CARSON of Indiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Education to conduct a study of the relative value of General Equivalency Diplomas and a review of policies and procedures to determine how the Department of Education can better serve the Nation's educational needs, 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 “General Equivalency
5 Diploma Reform and Improvement Act of 2001”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Since the mid-1970s, the Federal Govern-
2 ment and many State and local agencies have en-
3 couraged Americans to seek a General Equivalency
4 Diploma (GED) rather than a traditional high
5 school degree.

6 (2) As the economy now demands higher skilled
7 workers, the General Equivalency Diploma is no
8 longer an adequate alternative to a traditional high
9 school degree.

10 (3) Economists Stephen Cameron and James
11 Heckman have studied individuals with exam-cer-
12 tified high school equivalents and have made each of
13 the following conclusions:

14 (A) Individuals with exam-certified high
15 school equivalents are statistically indistinguish-
16 able in the labor market from high school drop-
17 outs.

18 (B) Individuals with exam-certified equiva-
19 lents and high school dropouts have comparably
20 poor wages, earnings, hours of work, employ-
21 ment experiences, and job tenure.

22 (C) Measured by their ability and in their
23 labor market status, individuals who have a
24 General Equivalency Diploma are closer to high

1 school dropouts than individuals with tradi-
2 tional high school degrees.

3 (D) Even after controlling for ability, men
4 with General Equivalency Diplomas have infe-
5 rior labor market status than individuals with
6 traditional high school degrees.

7 (E) Individuals with General Equivalency
8 Diplomas have lower employment rates and less
9 work experience than individuals with tradi-
10 tional high school degrees.

11 (F) Both anecdotal and empirical evidence
12 suggests that employers and the military dis-
13 count the General Equivalency Diploma.

14 (G) There is no cheap substitute for class-
15 room instruction and education programs that
16 focus on obtaining a General Equivalency Di-
17 ploma as an end in itself are misguided.

18 (4) Although the rates of teenage pregnancy
19 and early childbearing in the United States have de-
20 creased somewhat recently, approximately 3,941,553
21 adolescent girls between the ages of 10 and 17 gave
22 birth in 1999, and the number of births for 2000
23 has yet to be determined.

24 (5) While, as a Nation, we should continue to
25 make efforts to prevent unintended pregnancies, we

1 must also provide pregnant teenagers and young
2 mothers with educational opportunities to help them
3 become productive citizens and good, caring parents.

4 (6) No Americans, including pregnant teen-
5 agers, young mothers, and young fathers, should be
6 provided with a second-rate, inferior education.

7 **SEC. 3. STUDY AND REVIEW OF POLICIES.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education
9 shall—

10 (1) conduct a study to review the value of a
11 General Equivalency Diploma (GED) relative to a
12 traditional high school degree; and

13 (2) review the policies and procedures of the
14 Department of Education to determine means by
15 which the Department can reform such policies and
16 procedures to allow the Department—

17 (A) to cooperate with other Federal agen-
18 cies to improve the educational opportunities of-
19 fered to all Americans, including pregnant teen-
20 agers and young mothers;

21 (B) to work with States and local edu-
22 cational agencies to promote high quality edu-
23 cation for all Americans, including pregnant
24 teenagers and young mothers;

1 (C) to encourage individuals, including
2 pregnant teenagers and young mothers, who al-
3 ready have dropped out of school to return to
4 school to receive additional training;

5 (D) to encourage individuals currently
6 working to obtain a General Equivalency Di-
7 ploma to enter community or four-year colleges
8 in order to improve their skills and enhance the
9 value of their education credentials; and

10 (E) to encourage the restructuring the
11 General Equivalency Diploma to make it more
12 relevant to current high educational standards.

13 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date
14 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall transmit to
15 Congress a report containing—

16 (1) the results of the study conducted under this sec-
17 tion;

18 (2) the results of the review conducted under this sec-
19 tion; and

20 (3) any recommendations for reform.

21 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
23 this Act \$2,000,000 for fiscal years 2002 and 2003.

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