

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 613

To provide a grant to develop initiatives and disseminate information about character education, and a grant to research character education.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2001

Mr. SMITH of Texas (for himself and Mr. CLEMENT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To provide a grant to develop initiatives and disseminate information about character education, and a grant to research 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 “Character Learning
5 and Student Success Act of 2001” (CLASS Act of 2001).

6 **SEC. 2. GRANT TO DEVELOP INITIATIVES AND DISSEMI-**
7 **NATE INFORMATION ABOUT CHARACTER**
8 **EDUCATION.**

9 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The commitment of schools to the academic
2 achievement of students should be partnered with an
3 effort to address and improve the character of stu-
4 dents.

5 (2) Improving the character of students in-
6 cludes ensuring that students understand, care
7 about, and act upon ethical values and virtues.

8 (3) Improving the character of students pro-
9 motes a more compassionate and responsible society.

10 (4) Character education is an initiative in
11 schools that attends to the social, emotional, and
12 ethical development of students and is a means of
13 teaching, modeling, and practicing positive ethical
14 character traits as part of the regular school cur-
15 riculum and culture.

16 (5) Effective character education increases the
17 self-esteem of students and decreases the risk that
18 students will become isolated or do harm to others.

19 (6) Schools that integrate character education
20 into existing curriculum and daily activities foster
21 the development of core ethical values and virtues in
22 students, and provide for students a model of a com-
23 munity that is comprised of mature and responsible
24 individuals.

1 (7) An increasing number of States and local
2 educational agencies are promoting the implementa-
3 tion of character education initiatives.

4 (8) Successful character education requires that
5 States, local educational agencies, schools, and
6 teachers have access to effective methodologies, high-
7 quality initiatives, professional development opportu-
8 nities, criteria for assessing initiatives, and cost-ef-
9 fective opportunities to network nationally with each
10 other, especially through electronic means.

11 (9) As States and local educational agencies
12 continue to coordinate the implementation of char-
13 acter education in schools, a central and comprehen-
14 sive source of information regarding the activities of
15 States and local educational agencies becomes in-
16 creasingly necessary.

17 (10) Information about the effectiveness of
18 Federal, State, and local educational agency initia-
19 tives, the impact of those initiatives, and the ad-
20 vancement of character education in schools is essen-
21 tial to successfully educating students about char-
22 acter.

23 (b) GRANT AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary is au-
24 thorized to make a single 5-year grant to the eligible orga-

1 nization that, in the judgment of the Secretary, best
2 demonstrates—

3 (1) an expertise on the national level in pro-
4 viding to schools comprehensive and objective infor-
5 mation regarding character education policies, orga-
6 nizations, initiatives, curricula, methods, research,
7 and assessment;

8 (2) a membership that is representative of the
9 various individuals and groups who provide char-
10 acter education initiatives, resources, and curricula
11 to schools; and

12 (3) a history of, and commitment to, promoting
13 and advocating quality character education initia-
14 tives.

15 (c) GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—

16 (1) INITIATIVE DEVELOPMENT.—The recipient
17 of the grant under subsection (b) (hereafter in this
18 section referred to as the “grantee”) shall use the
19 grant funds to develop initiatives that—

20 (A) present methods of addressing core
21 ethical values in a comprehensive manner in
22 schools;

23 (B) emphasize student motivation and be-
24 havior;

1 (C) assist in the development of schools as
2 caring communities;

3 (D) give students the opportunity to put
4 character lessons into practice;

5 (E) provide for the inclusion of families
6 and communities in character education;

7 (F) emphasize leadership, service, and
8 teamwork as dimensions of character education;
9 and

10 (G) evaluate the effectiveness of character
11 education, including the effect of character edu-
12 cation initiatives on disciplinary referrals and
13 on teacher expectations.

14 (2) INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.—The grant-
15 ee shall use the grant funds to collect and make
16 available, in electronic form and through other
17 means, information concerning—

18 (A) quality character education initiatives
19 and methods;

20 (B) models of professional development in
21 character education;

22 (C) methods of assessing and evaluating
23 the effectiveness of character education initia-
24 tives;

1 (D) the integration of character education
2 into educational content, performance stand-
3 ards, and educational reform efforts; and

4 (E) any topic that would be helpful to
5 character educators in implementing character
6 education initiatives.

7 (3) PROVISION OF SERVICES.—The grantee
8 shall use the grant funds to provide—

9 (A) a searchable database that contains
10 background and contact information on the
11 leading character education groups, curricula,
12 books, initiatives, and videos;

13 (B) a checklist of criteria for schools to as-
14 sess the appropriateness of particular character
15 education curricula to the needs of such
16 schools;

17 (C) an index of websites regarding char-
18 acter education; and

19 (D) telephone assistance and a toll-free ac-
20 cess number.

21 (d) REPORT.—The grantee shall submit to the Sec-
22 retary an annual report that—

23 (1) describes the progress of the grantee in car-
24 rying out the requirements described in subsection

25 (c), including a listing of—

1 (A) the number of requests for information
2 received by the grantee in the course of car-
3 rying out such requirements;

4 (B) who made such requests; and

5 (C) the types of information requested;

6 (2) identifies unmet and future information
7 needs in the field of character education; and

8 (3) provides a detailed account of the use of the
9 grant funds provided under this section.

10 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
11 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
12 \$750,000 for each of fiscal years 2002 through 2006.

13 **SEC. 3. GRANT TO CONDUCT CHARACTER EDUCATION RE-**
14 **SEARCH.**

15 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

16 (1) States and local educational agencies have
17 benefitted from Federal funding to support the im-
18 plementation of character education initiatives in the
19 schools in such States, but have been subject to
20 minimal reporting requirements regarding the im-
21 pact of such initiatives.

22 (2) The number of schools currently imple-
23 menting character education initiatives is undeter-
24 mined, and the scope and success of such initiatives
25 are unknown.

1 (3) The continuing needs of schools that have
2 begun character education initiatives have not been
3 identified.

4 (4) The resources required by schools that have
5 not yet been able to start character education initia-
6 tives are unknown.

7 (5) Efforts should be made to determine the ex-
8 tent to which schools are undertaking character edu-
9 cation, the effectiveness of such efforts, and the ex-
10 tent to which Federal funds are being used to spon-
11 sor effective character education initiatives.

12 (b) GRANT AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary is au-
13 thorized to make a single 5-year grant to the eligible orga-
14 nization that, in the judgment of the Secretary, best
15 demonstrates—

16 (1) expertise in evaluation and research;

17 (2) a conceptual understanding of the various
18 approaches used in character education;

19 (3) experience in developing character education
20 initiatives in schools;

21 (4) expertise in understanding and identifying
22 quality character education initiatives;

23 (5) an established record of research and prac-
24 tice in the field of character education;

1 (6) an established record of publishing research
2 findings; and

3 (7) a partnership or connection with an institu-
4 tion of higher education.

5 (c) GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—The recipient of the
6 grant under subsection (b) (hereafter in this section re-
7 ferred to as the “grantee”) shall—

8 (1) determine the extent to which schools are
9 undertaking character education initiatives;

10 (2) identify and classify the various character
11 education approaches being undertaken in schools;

12 (3) investigate the extent to which Federal and
13 State funds have facilitated the implementation of
14 character education initiatives; and

15 (4) assess the effectiveness of character edu-
16 cation initiatives, including evaluating the reported
17 outcomes of character education initiatives.

18 (d) REPORT.—The grantee shall submit to the Sec-
19 retary an annual report, titled “The State of Character
20 Education in the Nation’s Schools”, that—

21 (1) specifies the progress of its research in the
22 areas identified in subsection (c);

23 (2) provides a detailed description of the results
24 of its research;

1 (3) discusses unmet and future information
2 needs in the field of character education; and

3 (4) provides a detailed account of the use of the
4 grant funds provided under this section.

5 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
6 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
7 \$700,000 for each of fiscal years 2002 through 2006.

8 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

9 In this Act:

10 (1) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATION.—The term “eligi-
11 ble organization” means an organization (or a group
12 of organizations, if the group meets the requirement
13 of subparagraph (C) and each organization com-
14 prising the group meets the requirements of sub-
15 paragraphs (A) and (B)) that—

16 (A) is described in section 501(c)(3) of the
17 Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

18 (B) is exempt from taxation under section
19 501(a) of such Code; and

20 (C) has submitted a grant application to
21 the Secretary at such time, in such form, and
22 containing such information as the Secretary
23 may reasonably require.

24 (2) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
25 “local educational agency” has the meaning given

1 such term under section 14101 of the Elementary
2 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
3 8801).

4 (3) SCHOOL.—The term “school” means any el-
5 elementary school (as defined by section 14101 of the
6 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
7 (20 U.S.C. 8801)) and any secondary school (as de-
8 fined by such section).

9 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
10 the Secretary of Education.

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