

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2173

To establish a grant program to provide comprehensive eye examinations to children, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 20, 2003

Mr. PASCRELL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To establish a grant program to provide comprehensive eye examinations to children, 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 “Children’s Vision Im-
5 provement and Learning Readiness Act of 2003”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) Eighty percent of what children learn is ac-
9 quired through the visual processing of information.

1 (2) Visual impairment is one of the 10 most
2 common causes of disability in America. In children,
3 visual impairment is associated with developmental
4 delays and the need for special education, vocational,
5 and social services. At least 20 percent of children
6 with learning disabilities have been found to have
7 prominent visual information processing problems.

8 (3) It is estimated that more than 10,000,000
9 children (from birth to age 10) suffer from vision
10 problems, with one in 20 preschoolers and one in
11 four school aged children affected.

12 (4) It is estimated that only 14 percent of chil-
13 dren under the age of 6 receive a comprehensive eye
14 examination. Only one-third of all children have had
15 an eye examination or vision screening prior to en-
16 tering school.

17 **SEC. 3. GRANTS REGARDING COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAMI-**
18 **NATIONS FOR CHILDREN.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
20 Human Services (referred to in this section as the “Sec-
21 retary” may make grants to States for the purpose of—

22 (1) providing comprehensive eye examinations
23 for children identified or considered at high risk of
24 vision impairment, with priority given to school-

1 based programs for children who are under the age
2 of 9;

3 (2) providing subsequent treatment or services
4 necessary to correct vision problems; and

5 (3) developing and disseminating, to parents,
6 teachers, health care practitioners, and the public,
7 educational materials on recognizing signs of visual
8 impairment in children, and the State's vision im-
9 provement initiatives.

10 (b) CRITERIA AND COORDINATION.—

11 (1) CRITERIA.—The Secretary, in consultation
12 with appropriate professional and consumer organi-
13 zations including individuals with knowledge of age
14 appropriate vision services, shall develop criteria—

15 (A) governing the operation of the grant
16 program; and

17 (B) for the collection of data related to vi-
18 sion assessment and the utilization of followup
19 services.

20 (2) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall, as
21 appropriate, coordinate the program under sub-
22 section (a) with the program under section 330 of
23 the Public Health Service Act (relating to health
24 centers), the program under title XIX of the Social
25 Security Act (relating to the Medicaid program), the

1 program under title XXI of such Act (relating to the
2 State children's health insurance program), and with
3 other Federal or State program that provide services
4 to children.

5 (c) APPLICATION.—A grant may be made under sub-
6 section (a) only if an application for the grant is submitted
7 to the Secretary and the application is in such form, is
8 made in such manner, and contains such information as
9 the Secretary may require, including—

10 (1) information on existing Federal, Federal-
11 State, or State-funded children's vision screening
12 programs;

13 (2) a plan for the use of grant funds, including
14 how funds will be used to compliment existing State
15 efforts;

16 (3) a plan to determine if a grant eligible child
17 has received an age appropriate vision screening;
18 and

19 (4) a description of how funds will be used to
20 provide items or services only as a secondary payer
21 to—

22 (A) any State compensation program,
23 under an insurance policy, or under any Fed-
24 eral or State health benefits program; or

1 (B) by any entity that provides health
2 services on a prepaid basis.

3 (d) EVALUATIONS.—A grant may be made under
4 subsection (a) only if the State involved agrees that, not
5 later than 1 year after the date on which amounts under
6 the grant are first received by the State, and annually
7 thereafter while receiving amounts under the grant, the
8 State will submit to the Secretary an evaluation of the
9 operations and activities carried out under the grant, in-
10 cluding—

11 (1) an assessment of the utilization of vision
12 services and the status of children receiving these
13 services as a result of the activities carried out
14 under the grant;

15 (2) the collection, analysis, and reporting of
16 children’s vision data according to guidelines pre-
17 scribed by the Secretary; and

18 (3) such other information as the Secretary
19 may require.

20 (e) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the
21 term “comprehensive eye examination” includes an assess-
22 ment of a patient’s history, general medical observation,
23 external and ophthalmoscopic examination, visual acuity,
24 ocular alignment and motility, refraction, and as appro-

1 priate, binocular vision or gross visual fields, performed
2 by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

3 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the
4 purpose of carrying out this section, there are authorized
5 to be appropriated \$75,000,000 for fiscal year 2004, and
6 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years
7 2005 through 2007.

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