

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2858

To establish and strengthen postsecondary programs and courses in the subjects of traditional American history, free institutions, and Western civilization, available to students preparing to teach these subjects, and to other students.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 9, 2005

Mr. PETRI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To establish and strengthen postsecondary programs and courses in the subjects of traditional American history, free institutions, and Western civilization, available to students preparing to teach these subjects, and to other students.

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 “Higher Education for
5 Freedom Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

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

1 (1) Given the increased threat to American
2 ideals in the trying times in which we live, it is im-
3 portant to preserve and defend our common heritage
4 of freedom and civilization and to ensure that future
5 generations of Americans understand the importance
6 of traditional American history and the principles of
7 free government on which this Nation was founded
8 in order to provide the basic knowledge that is es-
9 sential to full and informed participation in civic life
10 and to the larger vibrancy of the American experi-
11 ment in self-government, binding together a diverse
12 people into a single Nation with a common purpose.

13 (2) However, despite its importance, most of
14 the Nation's colleges and universities no longer re-
15 quire United States history or systematic study of
16 Western civilization and free institutions as a pre-
17 requisite to graduation.

18 (3) In addition, too many of our Nation's ele-
19 mentary and secondary school history teachers lack
20 the training necessary to effectively teach these sub-
21 jects, due largely to the inadequacy of their teacher
22 preparation.

23 (4) Distinguished historians and intellectuals
24 fear that without a common civic memory and a
25 common understanding of the remarkable individ-

1 uals, events, and ideals that have shaped our Nation
2 and its free institutions, the people in the United
3 States risk losing much of what it means to be an
4 American, as well as the ability to fulfill the funda-
5 mental responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.

6 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to pro-
7 mote and sustain postsecondary academic centers, insti-
8 tutes, and programs that offer undergraduate and grad-
9 uate courses, support research, sponsor lectures, seminars,
10 and conferences, and develop teaching materials, for the
11 purpose of developing and imparting a knowledge of tradi-
12 tional American history, the American founding, and the
13 history and nature of, and threats to, free institutions, or
14 of the nature, history and achievements of western civiliza-
15 tion, particularly for—

16 (1) undergraduate students who are enrolled in
17 teacher education programs, who may consider be-
18 coming school teachers, or who wish to enhance their
19 civic competence;

20 (2) elementary, middle, and secondary school
21 teachers in need of additional training in order to ef-
22 fectively teach in these subject areas; and

23 (3) graduate students and postsecondary fac-
24 ulty who wish to teach about these subject areas
25 with greater knowledge and effectiveness.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

2 For purposes of this Act:

3 (1) **ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.**—The term “eligible
4 ble institution” means—

5 (A) an institution of higher education;

6 (B) a specific program within an institu-
7 tion of higher education; and

8 (C) a non-profit history or academic orga-
9 nization associated with higher education whose
10 mission is consistent with the purposes of this
11 Act.

12 (2) **FREE INSTITUTION.**—The term “free insti-
13 tution” means an institution that emerged out of
14 Western Civilization, such as democracy, constitu-
15 tional government, individual rights, market econom-
16 ics, religious freedom and tolerance, and freedom of
17 thought and inquiry.

18 (3) **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**—The
19 term “institution of higher education” has the same
20 meaning given that term under section 101 of the
21 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

22 (4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means
23 the Secretary of Education.

24 (5) **TRADITIONAL AMERICAN HISTORY.**—The
25 term “traditional American history” means—

1 (A) the significant constitutional, political,
2 intellectual, economic, and foreign policy trends
3 and issues that have shaped the course of
4 American history; and

5 (B) the key episodes, turning points, and
6 leading figures involved in the constitutional,
7 political, intellectual, diplomatic, and economic
8 history of the United States.

9 **SEC. 4. GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appropriated to
11 carry out this act, the secretary shall award grants, on
12 a competitive basis, to eligible institutions, which grants
13 shall be used for—

14 (1) history teacher preparation initiatives,
15 that—

16 (A) stress content mastery in traditional
17 American history and the principles on which
18 the American political system is based, includ-
19 ing the history and philosophy of free institu-
20 tions, and the study of Western civilization; and

21 (B) provide for grantees to carry out re-
22 search, planning, and coordination activities de-
23 voted to the purposes of this Act; and

24 (2) strengthening postsecondary programs in
25 fields related to the American founding, free institu-

1 tions, and western civilization, particularly
2 through—

3 (A) the design and implementation of
4 courses, lecture series and symposia, the devel-
5 opment and publication of instructional mate-
6 rials, and the development of new, and sup-
7 porting of existing, academic centers;

8 (B) research supporting the development
9 of relevant course materials;

10 (C) the support of faculty teaching in un-
11 dergraduate and graduate programs; and

12 (D) the support of graduate and post-
13 graduate fellowships and courses for scholars
14 related to such fields.

15 (b) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In selecting eligible insti-
16 tutions for grants under this section for any fiscal year,
17 the Secretary shall establish criteria by regulation, which
18 shall, at a minimum, consider the education value and rel-
19 evance of the institution's programming to carrying out
20 the purposes of this Act and the expertise of key personnel
21 in the area of traditional American history and the prin-
22 ciples on which the American political system is based, in-
23 cluding the political and intellectual history and philos-
24 ophy of free institutions, the American Founding, and

1 other key events that have contributed to American free-
2 dom, and the study of Western civilization.

3 (c) GRANT APPLICATION.—An eligible institution
4 that desires to receive a grant under this Act shall submit
5 to the Secretary an application at such time, in such man-
6 ner, and containing such information as the Secretary may
7 prescribe by regulation.

8 (d) GRANT REVIEW.—The Secretary shall establish
9 procedures for reviewing and evaluating grants made
10 under this Act.

11 (e) GRANT AWARDS.—

12 (1) MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM GRANTS.—The
13 Secretary shall award each grant under this Act in
14 an amount that is not less than \$400,000 and not
15 more than \$6,000,000.

16 (2) EXCEPTION.—A subgrant made by an eligi-
17 ble institution under this Act to another eligible in-
18 stitution shall not be subject to the minimum
19 amount specified in paragraph (1).

20 (f) MULTIPLE AWARDS.—For the purposes of this
21 Act, the Secretary may award more than 1 grant to an
22 eligible institution.

23 (g) SUBGRANTS.—An eligible institution may use
24 grant funds provided under this Act to award subgrants

1 to other eligible institutions at the discretion of, and sub-
2 ject to the oversight of, the Secretary.

3 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 For the purpose of carrying out this Act, there are
5 authorized to be appropriated—

6 (1) \$140,000,000 for fiscal year 2006; and

7 (2) such sums as may be necessary for each of
8 the succeeding 5 fiscal years.

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