

109TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3995

To provide education opportunity grants to low-income secondary school students.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 29, 2006

Mr. DEMINT (for himself and Mr. OBAMA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To provide education opportunity grants to low-income secondary school 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 “Education Opportunity
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The academic intensity of a student’s sec-
9 ondary school curriculum counts more than any

1 other precollegiate factor in providing momentum to-
2 ward eventual completion of a college degree.

3 (2) By failing to provide challenging course
4 work, some secondary schools do not present ade-
5 quate opportunities for all students to learn. Some
6 groups of students are excluded from such opportu-
7 nities more than others. For example, students from
8 the lowest socioeconomic status are much more likely
9 than their wealthier peers to attend secondary
10 schools that do not offer any mathematics beyond
11 Algebra 2.

12 (3) To close gaps in the preparation for college,
13 and in the eventual attainment of a college degree,
14 the provision of challenging curriculum for all stu-
15 dents is necessary.

16 (4) Colleges and community colleges have re-
17 cently begun to provide challenging courses to sec-
18 ondary school students, and distance learning pro-
19 vides additional options if students have access to
20 distance learning technology.

21 (5) The cost of enrolling in a college-level
22 course is a barrier to learning opportunities for
23 those students most in need of such opportunities.
24 Providing grants to capable students from low-in-
25 come families will provide these students with in-

1 creased access to the challenging coursework that
 2 leads to success in college or the workplace.

3 **SEC. 3. EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY GRANTS FOR ELIGIBLE**
 4 **LOW-INCOME SECONDARY SCHOOL STU-**
 5 **DENTS.**

6 (a) EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY GRANTS FOR ELIGI-
 7 BLE LOW-INCOME SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.—
 8 Part A of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965
 9 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
 10 the following:

11 **“Subpart 9—Education Opportunity Grants for**
 12 **Eligible Low-Income Secondary School Students**
 13 **“SEC. 420L. EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY GRANTS.**

14 “(a) EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY GRANTS AUTHOR-
 15 IZED.—The Secretary is authorized to award grants to eli-
 16 gible low-income secondary school students to enable the
 17 students to pay the cost of taking eligible courses while
 18 enrolled in secondary school.

19 “(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20 “(1) ELIGIBLE COURSE.—The term ‘eligible
 21 course’ means a course—

22 “(A) that is offered by an institution of
 23 higher education eligible to participate in a pro-
 24 gram under this title;

1 “(B) for which the institution of higher
2 education awards postsecondary academic credit
3 that is transferrable;

4 “(C) that is held at the institution of high-
5 er education, held at a secondary school, or of-
6 fered in whole or in part through telecommuni-
7 cations; and

8 “(D) that is not remedial in nature.

9 “(2) ELIGIBLE LOW-INCOME SECONDARY
10 SCHOOL STUDENT.—The term ‘eligible low-income
11 secondary school student’ means a student who—

12 “(A) is enrolled in a secondary school;

13 “(B) has a family income that is less than
14 185 percent of the poverty line (as defined by
15 the Office of Management and Budget, and re-
16 vised annually in accordance with section
17 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant
18 Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) applicable to a family
19 of the size involved; and

20 “(C) is a junior or senior in secondary
21 school and is making satisfactory progress to-
22 ward on-time graduation from secondary school.

23 “(c) AMOUNT.—

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award
25 a grant under this section to an eligible low-income

1 secondary school student in an amount equal to the
2 cost of tuition for each eligible course the student
3 takes while the student is enrolled in secondary
4 school, except that the total amount of grant assist-
5 ance awarded under this section to an eligible low-
6 income secondary school student for any academic
7 year shall not exceed \$4,050.

8 “(2) COST OF TUITION.—The cost of tuition for
9 an eligible course shall be the lesser of—

10 “(A) the cost of tuition and any necessary
11 fees or supplies that the institution of higher
12 education charges students of the secondary
13 school that the eligible low-income secondary
14 school student attends for the eligible course; or

15 “(B) \$1,200.

16 “(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
17 tion shall be construed to affect any policy or agreement,
18 under which an institution of higher education offers dis-
19 counted tuition, fees, or supply costs to secondary school
20 students, that was in existence on the day before that date
21 of enactment of the Education Opportunity Act.

22 “(e) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Grant funds
23 provided under this section shall supplement, not sup-
24 plant, other non-Federal funds that are available to assist
25 an eligible low-income secondary school student pay for

1 an eligible course while the student is enrolled in sec-
 2 ondary school.

3 “(f) INTERACTION WITH FEDERAL PELL GRANTS.—
 4 An eligible low-income secondary school student’s receipt
 5 of an award under this section shall not in any way affect
 6 the student’s future eligibility for a Federal Pell Grant
 7 under section 401 or the amount of such Federal Pell
 8 Grant.

9 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
 10 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
 11 \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2007 and each of the 4 suc-
 12 ceeding fiscal years.”.

13 (b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the
 14 Senate that—

15 (1) any funds appropriated to carry out the
 16 grant program under section 420L of the Higher
 17 Education Act of 1965 (as added by subsection (a))
 18 should be in addition to the funds appropriated for
 19 Federal Pell Grants under section 401 of such Act;
 20 and

21 (2) the funding of the grant program under sec-
 22 tion 420L of such Act should not in any way affect
 23 the amount that is appropriated for Federal Pell
 24 Grants.

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