

113TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4259

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to lower the cost of college education by establishing pilot programs to expand student access to digital course materials.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 14, 2014

Ms. DELBENE (for herself and Mr. HANNA) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to lower the cost of college education by establishing pilot programs to expand student access to digital course materials.

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 “Electronic Books
5 Opening Opportunity for Knowledge Act of 2014” or the
6 “E-BOOK Act of 2014”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Rising costs are making it increasingly dif-
2 ficult for students and their families to afford a col-
3 lege education.

4 (2) In addition to the growing price of tuition,
5 fees, and room and board, the average college stu-
6 dent in the United States must also spend more
7 than \$1,000 per year on textbooks and supplies.

8 (3) New learning technologies in higher edu-
9 cation provide a growing opportunity to reduce the
10 cost of course materials for students and their fami-
11 lies.

12 (4) All students deserve the opportunity to ob-
13 tain a high-quality education and acquire the skills
14 needed to compete in 21st-century economy.

15 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

16 The purpose of this Act is to identify savings in the
17 cost of public college education for undergraduate stu-
18 dents by funding pilot programs in institutions of higher
19 education to provide expanded access to digital course ma-
20 terials as part of their academic programs.

21 **SEC. 4. GRANTS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO DIGITAL COURSE**
22 **MATERIALS.**

23 Title VIII of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
24 U.S.C. 1161a et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
25 the following new part:

1 **“PART BB—GRANTS FOR THE EXPANSION OF**
2 **ACCESS TO DIGITAL COURSE MATERIALS**
3 **“SEC. 891. GRANTS FOR ACCESS TO DIGITAL COURSE MATE-**
4 **RIALS.**

5 “(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made avail-
7 able by the Secretary pursuant to subsection (g), the
8 Secretary may award grants on a competitive basis
9 to not more than 10 institutions of higher education
10 to reduce the cost of attendance for undergraduate
11 students by providing such students with expanded
12 access to digital course materials.

13 “(2) AMOUNT OF FUNDS TO BE AWARDED.—
14 The Secretary shall determine the amount of funds
15 to be awarded for each grant based on the number
16 of students to be served under the grant, except that
17 no grant under this section shall be in an amount
18 that is more than \$2,000,000.

19 “(b) APPLICATION.—An institution desiring to obtain
20 a grant under this section shall submit an application to
21 the Secretary at such time, in such form, and accompanied
22 by such information, agreements, and assurances as the
23 Secretary may reasonably require.

24 “(c) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under this
25 section, the Secretary shall give preference to applications

1 that demonstrate a commitment to serving disadvantaged
2 students.

3 “(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Each grant awarded under
4 this section shall provide to an institution of higher edu-
5 cation funds to support a pilot program for the institution
6 to make digital course materials available to under-
7 graduate students in at least two different academic de-
8 partments. Such funds may be used for any of the fol-
9 lowing:

10 “(1) Purchasing and maintaining electronic
11 equipment or software necessary for the operation of
12 the pilot program, including mobile computer devices
13 and accompanying hardware, software applications,
14 computer systems and platforms, digital and online
15 content, online instruction, and other online services
16 and support.

17 “(2) Purchasing and maintaining digital and
18 online content for the institution to make available
19 electronically to instructors or students, including
20 paying any copyright fees associated with the digital
21 distribution of physical course materials.

22 “(3) Hiring staff for the administration of the
23 pilot program, with priority given to hiring enrolled
24 undergraduate students.

1 “(4) Building or acquiring extra storage space
2 dedicated to equipment used for the pilot program.

3 “(5) Revising and adapting academic curricula
4 as needed to implement the pilot program.

5 “(6) Acquiring such other goods or services as
6 the Secretary determines appropriate.

7 “(e) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

8 “(1) REPORT TO THE SECRETARY.—After a pe-
9 riod of time to be determined by the Secretary, each
10 institution of higher education that receives a grant
11 under this section shall submit to the Secretary a re-
12 port that includes—

13 “(A) an assessment of the effectiveness of
14 the pilot program funded by the grant in reduc-
15 ing the cost of attendance for students;

16 “(B) an assessment of any impact of the
17 pilot program on student achievement;

18 “(C) an accounting of the purposes for
19 which the grant funds were expended; and

20 “(D) any additional information the Sec-
21 retary reasonably requires.

22 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
23 three years after the end of the first fiscal year in
24 which a grant is awarded under this section, the
25 Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the

1 effectiveness of the grants. Such report shall in-
2 clude—

3 “(A) an estimate by the Secretary of the
4 amount of money saved by students who par-
5 ticipate in the pilot programs;

6 “(B) a summary of the best practices de-
7 veloped in the pilot programs;

8 “(C) a description of the types of digital
9 course materials used in the pilot programs, in-
10 cluding electronic books, interactive and adapt-
11 ive digital learning tools, and open educational
12 resources; and

13 “(D) any recommendations the Secretary
14 determines appropriate regarding future con-
15 gressional action related to student access to
16 digital course materials.

17 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

18 “(1) COST OF ATTENDANCE.—The term ‘cost of
19 attendance’ has the meaning given the term in sec-
20 tion 472.

21 “(2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—
22 The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the
23 meaning given the term in section 101(a), except
24 that such term only includes public institutions.

1 “(3) DIGITAL COURSE MATERIALS.—The term
2 ‘digital course materials’ includes electronic books,
3 portable document format and word-processing docu-
4 ments, Internet websites, interactive and adaptive
5 digital learning tools, open educational resources,
6 and other digital and online educational resources.

7 “(4) OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.—The
8 term ‘open educational resources’ means digital
9 course materials that are made freely available on-
10 line to the public with a permanent copyright license
11 granting advance permission for the public to access,
12 distribute, adapt, and otherwise use the work with
13 appropriate attribution to the authors as set forth in
14 the materials.

15 “(5) MOBILE COMPUTER DEVICE.—The term
16 ‘mobile computer device’ means an electronic reader
17 or tablet computer.

18 “(6) DISADVANTAGED STUDENT.—The term
19 ‘disadvantaged student’ means an undergraduate
20 student who is—

21 “(A) from a low-income family;

22 “(B) a minority; or

23 “(C) from an economically or otherwise
24 disadvantaged background.

1 “(g) FUNDING.—Of the funds made available in ap-
2 propriation Acts for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017
3 for the purpose of making competitive grants to institu-
4 tions of higher education under this Act, the Secretary
5 may make available to carry out this section not more than
6 \$20,000,000.

7 “(h) SUNSET.—No grants may be awarded under
8 this section after September 30, 2017.”.

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