

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2089

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

APRIL 29, 2015

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 2015” or the
6 “E-BOOK Act of 2015”.

7 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

8 The purpose of this Act is to identify savings in the
9 cost of higher education for undergraduate students by

1 funding pilot programs to expand student access to digital
2 academic course materials.

3 **SEC. 3. GRANTS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO DIGITAL COURSE**
4 **MATERIALS.**

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

8 **“PART BB—GRANTS FOR THE EXPANSION OF**
9 **ACCESS TO DIGITAL COURSE MATERIALS**

10 **“SEC. 899. GRANTS FOR ACCESS TO DIGITAL COURSE MATE-**
11 **RIALS.**

12 “(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

13 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made avail-
14 able by the Secretary pursuant to subsection (g), the
15 Secretary may award grants on a competitive basis
16 to not more than 10 institutions of higher education
17 to reduce the cost of attendance for undergraduate
18 students by providing such students with expanded
19 access to digital course materials.

20 “(2) AMOUNT OF FUNDS TO BE AWARDED.—

21 The Secretary shall determine the amount of funds
22 to be awarded for each grant based on the number
23 of students to be served under the grant, except that
24 no grant under this section shall be in an amount
25 that is more than \$2,000,000.

1 “(b) APPLICATION.—An institution desiring to obtain
2 a grant under this section shall submit an application to
3 the Secretary at such time, in such form, and accompanied
4 by such information, agreements, and assurances as the
5 Secretary may reasonably require.

6 “(c) PREFERENCE.—In awarding grants under this
7 section, the Secretary shall give preference to applications
8 that demonstrate a commitment to serving disadvantaged
9 students.

10 “(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Each grant awarded under
11 this section shall provide to an institution of higher edu-
12 cation funds to support a pilot program for the institution
13 to make digital course materials available to under-
14 graduate students in at least two different academic de-
15 partments. Such funds may be used for any of the fol-
16 lowing:

17 “(1) Purchasing and maintaining electronic
18 equipment or software necessary for the operation of
19 the pilot program, including mobile computer devices
20 and accompanying hardware, software applications,
21 computer systems and platforms, and other digital
22 and online services and support.

23 “(2) Purchasing and maintaining digital and
24 online content for the institution to make available
25 electronically to instructors or students, including

1 paying any copyright fees associated with the digital
2 distribution of physical course materials.

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

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

8 “(5) Supporting professional development ac-
9 tivities for instructors, instructional aides, or other
10 personnel as needed to support implementation of
11 the pilot program.

12 “(6) Revising and adapting academic curricula
13 as needed to implement the pilot program.

14 “(7) Acquiring such other goods or services as
15 the Secretary determines appropriate.

16 “(e) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

17 “(1) REPORT TO THE SECRETARY.—After a pe-
18 riod of time to be determined by the Secretary, each
19 institution of higher education that receives a grant
20 under this section shall submit to the Secretary a re-
21 port that includes—

22 “(A) an assessment of the effectiveness of
23 the pilot program funded by the grant in reduc-
24 ing the cost of attendance for students;

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

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

5 “(D) any additional information the Sec-
6 retary reasonably requires.

7 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than
8 three years after the end of the first fiscal year in
9 which a grant is awarded under this section, the
10 Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the
11 effectiveness of the grants. Such report shall in-
12 clude—

13 “(A) an estimate by the Secretary of the
14 amount of money saved by students who par-
15 ticipate in the pilot programs;

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

18 “(C) a description of the types of digital
19 course materials used in the pilot programs, in-
20 cluding electronic books, interactive and adapt-
21 ive digital learning tools, and open educational
22 resources; and

23 “(D) any recommendations the Secretary
24 determines appropriate regarding future con-

1 gressional action related to student access to
2 digital course materials.

3 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

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

11 “(3) DIGITAL COURSE MATERIALS.—The term
12 ‘digital course materials’ includes electronic books,
13 portable document format and word-processing docu-
14 ments, Internet websites, interactive and adaptive
15 digital learning tools, open educational resources,
16 and other digital and online educational resources.

17 “(4) OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.—The
18 term ‘open educational resources’ means digital
19 course materials that are made freely available on-
20 line to the public with a permanent copyright license
21 granting advance permission for the public to access,
22 distribute, adapt, and otherwise use the work with
23 appropriate attribution to the authors as set forth in
24 the materials.

1 “(5) MOBILE COMPUTER DEVICE.—The term
2 ‘mobile computer device’ means an electronic reader
3 or tablet computer.

4 “(6) DISADVANTAGED STUDENT.—The term
5 ‘disadvantaged student’ means an undergraduate
6 student who is—

7 “(A) from a low-income family;

8 “(B) a minority; or

9 “(C) from an economically or otherwise
10 disadvantaged background.

11 “(g) FUNDING.—Of the funds made available in ap-
12 propriation Acts for fiscal years 2016, 2017, and 2018
13 for the purpose of making competitive grants to institu-
14 tions of higher education under this Act, the Secretary
15 may make available to carry out this section not more than
16 \$20,000,000.

17 “(h) SUNSET.—No grants may be awarded under
18 this section after September 30, 2018.”.

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