

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1288

To direct the Secretary of Education to carry out a grant program for early childhood STEM activities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2017

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire (for herself, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Education to carry out a grant program for early childhood STEM activities.

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 “Early STEM Achieve-
5 ment Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Numerous studies have highlighted the
9 long-term academic benefits of high-quality early

1 childhood education and care. The Learning Policy
2 Institute, for example, reported in 2015 that North
3 Carolina students who participated in early child-
4 hood programs received higher scores on third-grade
5 standardized math assessments than their peers who
6 did not participate. Similarly, Michigan children who
7 attended early learning programs had better kinder-
8 garten readiness and better reading and math pro-
9 ficiency relative to their peers who did not have ac-
10 cess to such programs.

11 (2) Studies have also shown lower high-school
12 dropout rates among children who participate in
13 early childhood education programs relative to their
14 peers who did not, showing that the positive results
15 of quality early education programs continue for
16 many years.

17 (3) Beyond academic benefits, researchers have
18 shown positive economic impacts of early childhood
19 programs. In 2015, a National Bureau of Economic
20 Research study reported that each dollar invested in
21 early childhood returns approximately seven dollars,
22 in terms of workforce development. The Federal Re-
23 serve has also called for increased access to early
24 childhood education, pointing to the potential for fu-
25 ture economic development.

1 (4) There has been a growing need for STEM
2 workers that is projected to continue. The Bureau of
3 Labor Statistics estimated in 2012 that STEM occu-
4 pations will grow at a faster rate than other profes-
5 sions, noting also that the median annual salary for
6 STEM workers is higher than for other professions.

7 (5) Beginning STEM education as early as pos-
8 sible is key to future success in these fields, both in
9 school and potentially in the workforce. To that end,
10 businesses in the STEM fields like National Grid
11 have sought through corporate citizenship programs
12 to connect with and inspire young learners.

13 (6) Studies have shown that simple, age-appro-
14 priate activities, like building a tower of blocks or
15 spinning a mobile in a crib, can help encourage
16 STEM learning. As a White House blog post on the
17 importance of early STEM noted, “Research indi-
18 cates that as early as infancy, young children start
19 developing and testing hypotheses for how the world
20 around them works.”.

21 (7) A 2014 study from the University of Cali-
22 fornia-Berkeley Center for the Study of Child Care
23 Employment found that many early childhood prac-
24 titioners feel poorly equipped to teach early STEM

1 skills, making professional development and training
2 opportunities critical.

3 **SEC. 3. GRANT PROGRAM.**

4 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From the amounts ap-
5 propriated to carry out this Act, the Secretary of Edu-
6 cation shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligi-
7 ble entities to assist early childhood education programs
8 in carrying out early childhood STEM programs/activities.

9 (b) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this Act,
10 the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities de-
11 scribed in subsection (e)(2)(D).

12 (c) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity desiring to re-
13 ceive a grant under this section shall submit an application
14 to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and con-
15 taining such information as the Secretary may request.

16 (d) USES OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives
17 a grant under this section shall use the grant to carry
18 out not less than one of the following:

19 (1) Professional development relating to early
20 childhood STEM activities for teachers of early
21 childhood programs.

22 (2) Materials and equipment necessary to carry
23 out such early childhood STEM activities.

24 (3) Establishing partnerships between the eligi-
25 ble entity and an institution of higher education to

1 provide training in early childhood STEM activities
2 for teachers of early childhood programs.

3 (4) The provision of professional development
4 programs for teachers of early childhood program by
5 institutions of higher education.

6 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

7 (1) EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM.—A program
8 providing education and childcare to children from
9 birth through 5 years of age.

10 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
11 ty” means—

12 (A) a local educational agency providing an
13 early childhood program;

14 (B) an educational service agency serving
15 more than one such local educational agency;

16 (C) a nonprofit organization that provides
17 early childhood education and care; or

18 (D) an institution of higher education in
19 partnership with an early childhood program to
20 create training in early childhood STEM activi-
21 ties for teachers of such early childhood pro-
22 grams.

23 (3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
24 term “institution of higher education” has the

1 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
2 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

3 (4) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “educational
4 service agency”, “local educational agency”, and
5 “Secretary” have the meanings given the terms in
6 section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
7 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

8 (5) STEM.—The term “STEM” means science
9 (including computer science), technology, engineer-
10 ing, and mathematics.

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