

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3870

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

SEPTEMBER 28, 2017

Ms. DELBENE (for herself and Mr. MARINO) 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 2017” or the
6 “E-BOOK Act of 2017”.

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 that are not otherwise obli-
15 gated, the Secretary may award grants on a com-
16 petitive basis to not more than 10 institutions of
17 higher education to reduce the cost of attendance for
18 undergraduate students by providing such students
19 with expanded 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) Maintaining digital and online content for
24 the institution to make available electronically to in-
25 structors or students.

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

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

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

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

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

14 “(e) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

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

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

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

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

3 “(D) any additional information the Sec-
4 retary reasonably requires.

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

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

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

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

21 “(D) any recommendations the Secretary
22 determines appropriate regarding future con-
23 gressional action related to student access to
24 digital course materials.

25 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

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

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

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

22 “(5) MOBILE COMPUTER DEVICE.—The term
23 ‘mobile computer device’ means an electronic reader
24 or tablet computer.

1 “(6) DISADVANTAGED STUDENT.—The term
2 ‘disadvantaged student’ means an undergraduate
3 student who is—

4 “(A) from a low-income family;

5 “(B) a minority; or

6 “(C) from an economically or otherwise
7 disadvantaged background.

8 “(g) SUNSET.—No grants may be awarded under this
9 section after September 30, 2020.”.

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