

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1565

To support the preparation and retention of outstanding educators in all fields to ensure a bright future for children in under-resourced, underserved communities in the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 13, 2017

Mr. FRANKEN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To support the preparation and retention of outstanding educators in all fields to ensure a bright future for children in under-resourced, underserved communities in the United States, and for other purposes.

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 “Supporting Future
5 Educators Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) ESEA DEFINITIONS.—The terms “dual or
2 concurrent enrollment program”, “elementary
3 school”, “local educational agency”, and “secondary
4 school” have the meanings given the terms in section
5 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education
6 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

7 (2) CERTIFIED TEACHER.—The term “certified
8 teacher” means an individual who possesses a docu-
9 ment certifying that the individual has met the re-
10 quirements of a State for employment as a teacher
11 in the public schools of that State.

12 (3) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
13 ty” means a local educational agency (or a consor-
14 tium of such agencies) partnered with an institution
15 of higher education.

16 (4) QUALIFIED MENTOR TEACHER.—The term
17 “qualified mentor teacher” means an educator who
18 meets a minimum set of qualification standards as
19 determined by the Secretary.

20 (5) TEACHING RESIDENCY PROGRAM.—The
21 term “teaching residency program” has the meaning
22 given the term in section 200 of the Higher Edu-
23 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1021), except that
24 such term shall not include the requirement that the

1 prospective teacher acquire a master's degree not
2 later than 18 months after beginning the program.

3 (6) RURAL AREA.—The term “rural area” has
4 the meaning given the term in section 343(a)(13)(A)
5 of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development
6 Act (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)(13)(A)).

7 (7) RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT.—The term
8 “rural school district” means a school district that
9 serves 1 or more schools located in a rural area.

10 (8) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
11 the Secretary of Education.

12 **SEC. 3. STRENGTHEN-OUR-SCHOOLS GRANT PROGRAM.**

13 (a) STRENGTHEN-OUR-SCHOOLS GRANT PROGRAM
14 ESTABLISHED.—

15 (1) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From amounts ap-
16 propriated to carry out this section, the Secretary
17 shall establish a Strengthen-Our-Schools Grant Pro-
18 gram, through which the Secretary shall award
19 grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities.

20 (2) DURATION.—A grant awarded under this
21 section—

22 (A) shall be for a period of 5 years; and

23 (B) may be renewed if the eligible entity
24 demonstrates sufficient positive outcomes and

1 evidence of potential for continued success in
2 achieving the goals of the initial grant.

3 (b) APPLICATION AND APPROVAL.—

4 (1) APPLICATION.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity desir-
6 ing a grant under this section shall submit an
7 application to the Secretary at such time, in
8 such manner, and containing such information
9 as the Secretary may require.

10 (B) CONTENTS.—An application submitted
11 under subparagraph (A) shall—

12 (i) describe the activities for which as-
13 sistance under this section is sought;

14 (ii) provide such additional assurances
15 as the Secretary determines to be essential
16 to ensure compliance with the require-
17 ments of this section; and

18 (iii) if seeking support for a teaching
19 residency program, demonstrate that the
20 institution of higher education that is a
21 partner in the eligible entity is approved to
22 prepare candidates for State teaching li-
23 censure.

1 (2) APPROVAL.—The Secretary shall approve
2 any application for a program that includes the com-
3 ponents described in paragraph (1).

4 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant under
5 this section may use the grant fund to help cover the costs
6 associated with—

7 (1) teaching residency programs, including—

8 (A) resident tuition;

9 (B) resident salaries;

10 (C) mentor teacher incentives;

11 (D) facilities or infrastructure for a dis-
12 tance learning classroom within the school for
13 onsite coursework and practical learning; and

14 (E) any other purpose that the Secretary
15 determines appropriate.

16 (2) fulfilling additional credit requirements
17 needed for a teacher to become licensed in a second
18 subject area or earn an additional qualification that
19 meets a specific need of the school in which the
20 teacher is employed;

21 (3) fulfilling additional credit requirements
22 needed to qualify teachers to teach dual or concur-
23 rent enrollment programs; and

1 (4) housing supplements or special housing pro-
2 grams to support prospective teachers who complete
3 student teaching placements in high-need districts.

4 (d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants that propose to
5 cover costs associated with teacher residency programs,
6 the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities that
7 propose to carry out a program designed to prepare the
8 following school employees for teaching licensure:

9 (1) Paraprofessionals.

10 (2) Other employees of the school community
11 employed on the date of the determination.

12 (e) AWARD BASIS.—In awarding grants under this
13 section, the Secretary shall ensure that, to the extent prac-
14 ticable based on the applications received under subsection
15 (b), not less than 10 percent of the grant funds available
16 to carry out this section are designated for uses that ad-
17 dress teacher shortage challenges in rural school districts.

18 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL DATABASE OF QUALIFIED MENTOR**

19 **TEACHERS.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall create a na-
21 tional database of qualified mentor teachers who can pro-
22 vide student teacher supervision to participants in teacher
23 preparation programs during their student teaching place-
24 ment.

1 (b) DATABASE.—Each qualified mentor teacher data-
2 base entry shall include—

3 (1) basic information on the educational back-
4 ground and professional experience of the mentor,
5 including details of the subject areas and grade lev-
6 els the mentor is licensed to teach;

7 (2) a description of the subject areas and grade
8 levels the mentor feels most comfortable mentoring;
9 and

10 (3) a brief teaching philosophy statement.

11 (c) AVAILABILITY.—The database shall be available
12 as a resource for teacher preparation programs to allow
13 for prospective teachers to complete student teaching in
14 a location outside of the staffing area of the teacher prepa-
15 ration program.

16 **SEC. 5. SENSE OF THE SENATE.**

17 It is the sense of the Senate that teaching be formally
18 recognized as a career pathway that is part of “career and
19 technical education” as defined in section 3 of the Carl
20 D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006
21 (20 U.S.C. 2302), allowing early career pathway programs
22 in education, offered at the secondary school level and of-
23 fering college credit toward pursuing a teaching licensure

- 1 program, to be eligible for funds available through pro-
- 2 grams that support career and technical education.

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