To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to direct the Secretary of Education to award grants for teaching English learners to institutions of higher education.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 5, 2018

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BENNET, Ms. KLOBUCAR, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. HIRONO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to direct the Secretary of Education to award grants for teaching English learners to institutions of higher education.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Reaching English Learners Act”.
SEC. 2. TEACHING ENGLISH LEARNERS GRANT.

Part B of title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1031 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"Subpart 6—Teaching English Learners

“SEC. 259. TEACHING ENGLISH LEARNERS GRANT.

“(a) Authorization of Program.—The Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible partnerships to pay the Federal share of the costs of improving the preparation of teacher candidates to ensure that such teacher candidates possess the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively instruct English learners.

“(b) Duration of Grants.—A grant awarded under this section shall be for a period of not more than 5 years.

“(c) Non-Federal Share.—An eligible partnership that receives a grant under this section shall provide an amount of not less than 25 percent of the cost of the activities carried out under the grant from non-Federal sources, which may be provided in cash or in-kind.

“(d) Uses of Funds.—An eligible partnership that receives a grant under this section shall use the grant to—

“(1) develop or strengthen a teacher preparation program by integrating strategies for teaching English learners into the education curriculum and academic content;
“(2) provide teacher candidates participating in the teacher preparation program with skills related to—

“(A) helping English learners—

“(i) achieve at high levels in early childhood education programs, and in elementary schools and secondary schools, so such English learners can meet the challenging State academic standards adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 by the State of the school attended by the English learners, which all children in the State are expected to meet; and

“(ii) attain English proficiency;

“(B) appropriately identifying and meeting the specific learning needs of children with disabilities who are English learners;

“(C) recognizing and addressing the social and emotional needs of English learners; and

“(D) promoting parental, family, and community engagement in educational programs that serve English learners;
“(3) provide work-based learning opportunities for teacher candidates participating in the teacher preparation program; and

“(4) provide teacher candidates enrolled in the teacher preparation program with the required coursework to qualify for an English as a second language endorsement or initial teaching credential, as recognized by the State served by the eligible partnership.

“(e) APPLICATION.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible partnership seeking a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

“(2) CONTENTS.—Such application shall include a self-assessment by the eligible partnership of—

“(A) the existing teacher preparation program at the institution of higher education participating in the eligible partnership, as of the date of application, and the needs related to preparing teacher candidates to instruct English learners in the manner described in subsection (d)(2); and
“(B) the personnel needs for teachers who
instruct English learners at local, public early
colorhood education programs and at elemen-
tary schools and secondary schools.

“(f) Evaluations.—

“(1) Reports from Eligible Partnerships.—At the end of the grant period for a grant under this section, an eligible partnership receiving a grant under this section shall submit to the Sec-
retary the results of an evaluation conducted by the partnership to determine—

“(A) the effectiveness of teachers who com-
pleted a program under subsection (d)(1) with respect to the instruction of English learners;
and

“(B) the systemic impact of the activities carried out by such grant on how such partner-
ship prepares teachers to provide instruction in early childhood education programs, and elem-
entary schools and secondary schools.

“(2) Report from the Secretary.—Not later than 180 days after the last day of a grant pe-
riod for grants awarded under this section, the Sec-
retary shall make available to the authorizing com-
mittees and the public—
“(A) a summary of the evaluations submitted under paragraph (1) for such grants; and

“(B) information on best practices related to effective instruction of English learners.

“(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) CHILD WITH A DISABILITY.—The term ‘child with a disability’ has the meaning given the term in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

“(2) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ‘eligible institution of higher education’ means an institution of higher education that has a teacher preparation program.

“(3) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.—The term ‘eligible partnership’ means an eligible institution of higher education in partnership with a high-need local educational agency.

“(4) ENGLISH LEARNER.—The term ‘English learner’ has the meaning given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

“(5) TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM.—The term ‘teacher preparation program’ means a pro-
“(A) that is offered by an institution of higher education;

“(B) that leads to an undergraduate degree, a master’s degree, or completion of a postbaccalaureate program required for teacher certification; and

“(C) the graduates of which meet the applicable State certification or licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification.

“(6) WORK-BASED LEARNING.—The term ‘work-based learning’ means learning involving sustained interactions with teachers and English learners at public early childhood education programs, or elementary schools or secondary schools, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at the eligible institution of higher education involved, that foster in-depth, first-hand engagement with tasks required of a teacher providing instruction to English learners.”
SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

Section 200(6) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1021(6)) is amended by striking “section 251” and inserting “sections 251 and 259”.

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