

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4240

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce the number of times certain applicants for financial assistance are required to file a FAFSA, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 6, 2019

Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself, Ms. SCANLON, and Ms. SCHRIER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce the number of times certain applicants for financial assistance are required to file a FAFSA, 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 “File Once FAFSA
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ONE-TIME FAFSA FILING.**

2 Section 483(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
3 (20 U.S.C. 1090(a)) is amended by adding at the end the
4 following:

5 “(13) ONE-TIME FAFSA FILING.—

6 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any
7 other provision of this section and subject to
8 subparagraphs (B) and (C), an applicant who
9 submits a FAFSA for the first time during the
10 period required for the completion of the first
11 undergraduate baccalaureate course of study
12 being pursued by such applicant and is eligible
13 to receive a Federal Pell Grant for the award
14 year for which the applicant submitted such
15 FAFSA, for any succeeding award year—

16 “(i) for which the applicant does not
17 submit a FAFSA and for which the appli-
18 cant submits a certification form described
19 in subparagraph (D) that does not indicate
20 a change in the dependency status of such
21 applicant, such applicant—

22 “(I) shall not be required to sub-
23 mit a FAFSA to receive financial as-
24 sistance under this title; and

25 “(II) shall have an expected fam-
26 ily contribution for such year that is

1 equal to the expected family contribu-
2 tion of the applicant determined for
3 the award year for which the appli-
4 cant submitted a FAFSA during such
5 period, except that an adjustment to
6 such expected family contribution may
7 be made under section 479A;

8 “(ii) for which the applicant submits a
9 certification form described in subpara-
10 graph (D) that indicates a change in the
11 dependency status of the applicant, such
12 applicant—

13 “(I) shall be required to submit a
14 FAFSA with respect to such award
15 year to receive financial assistance
16 under this title; and

17 “(II) shall have an expected fam-
18 ily contribution for such year that is
19 determined based on such FAFSA;

20 “(iii) for which the applicant submits
21 a FAFSA, such applicant—

22 “(I) shall have an expected fam-
23 ily contribution for such year that is
24 determined based on such FAFSA;
25 and

1 “(II) shall be required to submit
2 a FAFSA for any other award year
3 for which the applicant seeks financial
4 assistance under this title; and

5 “(iv) for which the applicant does not
6 submit a certification form described in
7 subparagraph (D), such applicant shall
8 submit a FAFSA for such succeeding
9 award year and any other award year for
10 which the applicant seeks financial assist-
11 ance under this title.

12 “(B) ADJUSTMENT OF EXPECTED FAMILY
13 CONTRIBUTION.—With respect to an applicant
14 described in subparagraph (A)(i) who receives
15 an adjustment under section 479A to the ex-
16 pected family contribution of the applicant for
17 an award year, for any succeeding award year
18 after the award year for which the adjustment
19 was made, subclause (II) of such subparagraph
20 shall be applied to such applicant by sub-
21 stituting ‘expected family contribution of the
22 applicant as most recently adjusted under sec-
23 tion 479A for such applicant’ for the ‘expected
24 family contribution of the applicant determined

1 for the award year for which the applicant sub-
2 mitted a FAFSA during such period’.

3 “(C) RULE FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS.—

4 With respect to an applicant who submits a
5 FAFSA for award year 2020–2021 and enrolls
6 in an institution of higher education for such
7 year, subparagraph (A) shall be applied—

8 “(i) in the matter preceding clause (i),
9 by substituting ‘award year 2020–2021’
10 for ‘the first time’; and

11 “(ii) in clause (i)(II), by substituting
12 ‘award year 2020–2021’ for ‘the award
13 year for which the applicant submitted a
14 FAFSA during such period’.

15 “(D) STUDENT CERTIFICATION FORM.—

16 The Secretary, in cooperation with representa-
17 tives of agencies and organizations involved in
18 student financial assistance, shall use behav-
19 ioral science insights to produce, distribute, and
20 process free of charge a short and simple con-
21 sumer-tested certification form that uses skip
22 logic to bypass fields that are inapplicable to an
23 applicant. Such form shall not require an appli-
24 cant to provide data that the Secretary may
25 otherwise obtain with respect to the applicant

1 (such as age or active duty military status), and
2 may only contain the data elements required for
3 purposes of subparagraph (A)(i)—

4 “(i) to confirm whether the applicant
5 is—

6 “(I) a dependent student;

7 “(II) a single independent stu-
8 dent or a married independent stu-
9 dent without dependents (other than a
10 spouse); or

11 “(III) an independent student
12 with dependents other than a spouse;

13 “(ii) to allow the applicant to update
14 the contact information of such applicant
15 or the Federal School Code of the institu-
16 tion of higher education in which the appli-
17 cant is, or will be enrolled, for the award
18 year for which the applicant submits such
19 form; and

20 “(iii) to ask whether the applicant’s
21 need and eligibility for financial assistance
22 under this title has not changed substan-
23 tially since the most recent of the fol-
24 lowing:

1 “(I) The applicant submitted a
2 FAFSA.

3 “(II) The applicant received an
4 adjustment under section 479A to the
5 expected family contribution of the
6 applicant.

7 “(E) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

8 “(i) DEPENDENCY STATUS.—The
9 term ‘dependency status’ means the status
10 of an applicant as—

11 “(I) a dependent student;

12 “(II) a single independent stu-
13 dent or a married independent stu-
14 dent without dependents (other than a
15 spouse); or

16 “(III) an independent student
17 with dependents other than a spouse.

18 “(ii) SUCCEEDING AWARD YEAR.—
19 The term ‘succeeding award year’—

20 “(I) when used with respect to
21 an applicant who submits a FAFSA
22 for the first time for an award year
23 during the period required for the
24 completion of the first undergraduate
25 baccalaureate course of study being

1 pursued by such applicant, means any
2 award year during such period that
3 follows the award year for which the
4 applicant submits such FAFSA; and
5 “**(II)** when used with respect to
6 an applicant described in subpara-
7 graph (C), means any award year
8 after award year 2019–2020 during
9 the period required for the completion
10 of the first undergraduate bacca-
11 laureate course of study being pur-
12 sued by such applicant.”.

○