

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7587

To improve the literacy and English skills of English language learners,
and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 13, 2020

Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. SAN NICOLAS, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Ms. JAYAPAL, Ms. NORTON, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To improve the literacy and English skills of English
language learners, 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 “Families Learning and
5 Understanding English Together Act of 2020” or the
6 “FLUENT Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Census Bureau’s American Community
2 Survey of 2018 estimated 21.9 percent of United
3 States households speak a language other than
4 English at home.

5 (2) Many parents in many recently immigrated
6 families speak little to no English, can possess low
7 literacy skills in their native language due to limited
8 education, and frequently struggle to assist their
9 children’s English language development.

10 (3) The United States is a nation of immi-
11 grants, and even today, according to the Census Bu-
12 reau’s American Community Survey of 2018, more
13 than 44,000,000 individuals who live in the United
14 States were born outside the country.

15 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

16 The purpose of this Act is to improve the educational,
17 social, and economic advancement of families with English
18 language learners in need of literacy skills by expanding
19 and enhancing family literacy activities and services for
20 such families.

21 **SEC. 4. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.**

22 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From funds made
23 available pursuant to section 9, and after reserving funds
24 under section 9(b), the Secretary may award grants to
25 family literacy providers to provide, directly or through a

1 contract with another provider, family literacy services de-
2 signed for families with English language learners. Each
3 grant under this Act shall be for a period of 1 year and
4 may be renewed for a total of 5 additional years.

5 (b) APPLICATION.—Family literacy providers who de-
6 sire to receive a grant under this Act shall submit an ap-
7 plication at such time, containing such information, and
8 in such manner as the Secretary may require. Such appli-
9 cation shall include the following:

10 (1) An assurance that services provided with
11 funds under this Act shall be provided to the hard-
12 est-to-reach populations, including populations with
13 the greatest economic and social need.

14 (2) A description of the services that will be
15 provided with funds under this Act, including how
16 the services will be based on research-based reading
17 instruction for children who are English learners
18 and parents who are English language learners.

19 (3) A description of the outcome measures, con-
20 sistent with section 6, that are based on research
21 and will be employed by the family literacy provider
22 to measure the effectiveness of services provided
23 with funds under this Act.

24 (4) An assurance that, in providing family lit-
25 eracy services through the grant, the family literacy

1 provider will collaborate with one or more of the fol-
2 lowing:

3 (A) A local educational agency.

4 (B) An elementary school.

5 (C) A secondary school.

6 (D) A nonprofit entity.

7 (c) GRANT AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant under
8 this Act for a fiscal year shall not be less than \$150,000
9 or more than \$1,000,000.

10 (d) SERVICES REQUIREMENTS.—Family literacy
11 services under this Act shall be provided in sufficient in-
12 tensity in terms of hours, and shall be of sufficient dura-
13 tion, to make sustainable changes in a family and shall
14 integrate all of the following activities:

15 (1) Interactive literacy activities between par-
16 ents and their children.

17 (2) Training for parents regarding how to be
18 the primary teacher for their children and full part-
19 ners in the education of their children.

20 (3) Parent literacy training that leads to eco-
21 nomic self-sufficiency.

22 (4) An age-appropriate education to prepare
23 children for success in school and life experiences.

24 (e) SPECIAL RULE.—Family literacy services under
25 this Act may be provided to a family only if—

1 (1) each parent in the family has attained 16
2 years of age; and

3 (2) the family has at least one child who has
4 not yet attained 8 years of age.

5 **SEC. 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING.**

6 (a) **ACTIVITIES BY SECRETARY.**—The Secretary, act-
7 ing through the Assistant Secretary for Elementary and
8 Secondary Education, shall, through grants or contracts
9 as described in subsection (b), provide technical assistance
10 and training to grantees under this Act for the purposes
11 described in subsection (c).

12 (b) **ACTIVITIES BY NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.**—

13 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall make
14 grants to, or enter into contracts with, at least 2 eli-
15 gible national organizations to provide technical as-
16 sistance and training to grantees under this Act for
17 the purposes described in subsection (c).

18 (2) **DEFINITION.**—In this section, the term “el-
19 igible national organization” means a national orga-
20 nization with expertise in providing family literacy
21 services to English language learner populations.

22 (c) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of technical assistance
23 and training provided under this section are the following:

24 (1) Assisting grantees under this Act to im-
25 prove the quality of their family literacy services.

1 (2) Enabling such grantees that demonstrate
2 the effective provision of family literacy services,
3 based on improved outcomes for children and their
4 parents, to provide technical assistance and training
5 to government agencies and to family literacy pro-
6 viders that work in collaboration with such agencies
7 to improve the quality of their family literacy serv-
8 ices.

9 (3) Assisting such grantees in the implementa-
10 tion of literacy curriculum and training activities, in-
11 cluding curriculum and training activities that sup-
12 port building on a child's native language.

13 (d) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90 days
14 after the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall sub-
15 mit to the Committee on Education and Labor of the
16 House of Representatives and the Committee on Health,
17 Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate a report
18 on the technical assistance and training provided pursuant
19 to subsections (a) and (b). Each such report shall describe
20 the actions taken by the Secretary to ensure that such
21 technical assistance and training is of high quality and
22 is responsive to the needs of grantees under this Act.

23 **SEC. 6. OUTCOME MEASURES.**

24 The Secretary shall require each family literacy pro-
25 vider receiving a grant under this Act to meet culturally

1 appropriate and competent outcome measures described in
2 the provider's application under section 4, including out-
3 come measures with respect to—

4 (1) acquisition of the English language, includ-
5 ing improved educational levels;

6 (2) literacy skills and building of a home lan-
7 guage;

8 (3) improved parenting and life skills;

9 (4) the improved ability of parents who are
10 English language learners to effectively interact with
11 officials of the schools their children attend;

12 (5) improved developmental skills and inde-
13 pendent learning of the children;

14 (6) increased parental participation in their
15 children's education and home environments that are
16 supportive of educational endeavors; and

17 (7) employability skills.

18 **SEC. 7. EVALUATION.**

19 The Secretary shall conduct an annual evaluation of
20 the grant program under this Act. Such evaluation shall
21 be used by the Secretary—

22 (1) for program improvement;

23 (2) to further define the program's goals and
24 objectives; and

25 (3) to determine program effectiveness.

1 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

2 For purposes of this Act:

3 (1) APPLICATION OF ESEA TERMS.—The terms
4 “elementary school”, “English learner”, “local edu-
5 cational agency”, and “secondary school” have the
6 meanings given such terms in section 8101 of the
7 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
8 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

9 (2) ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER; FAMILY LIT-
10 ERACY ACTIVITIES.—The terms “English language
11 learner” and “family literacy activities” have the
12 meanings given the terms in section 203 of the
13 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29
14 U.S.C. 3272).

15 (3) FAMILY LITERACY PROVIDER.—The term
16 “family literacy provider” means an entity that—

17 (A) is located in a geographic area con-
18 taining at least one public elementary school or
19 secondary school with a majority enrollment of
20 children who are English learners; and

21 (B) is one of the following:

22 (i) A grantee under the Head Start
23 Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), or any other
24 Federal or State early childhood program.

25 (ii) An adult education provider.

26 (iii) A local educational agency.

1 (iv) A public or private nonprofit
2 agency.

3 (v) Another entity that has the dem-
4 onstrated ability to provide family literacy
5 services to English language learning
6 adults and families.

7 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
8 the Secretary of Education.

9 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
11 priated to carry out this Act \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal
12 years 2021 through 2025.

13 (b) RESERVATIONS.—From funds made available
14 pursuant to subsection (a) for a fiscal year, the Secretary
15 shall reserve—

16 (1) not more than 2 percent of such funds for
17 conducting the annual evaluation required by section
18 7; and

19 (2) \$5,000,000 for technical assistance and
20 training under section 5.

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