

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1364

To establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 8, 2019

Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. JONES) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Program.

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 “Early Pell Promise
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT PRO-**
7 **GRAM.**

8 Subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Edu-
9 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a et seq.) is amended
10 by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 401B. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT**
 2 **PROGRAM.**

3 “(a) PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—The Secretary is au-
 4 thorized to carry out an Early Federal Pell Grant Com-
 5 mitment Program (referred to in this section as the ‘Pro-
 6 gram’) under which the Secretary shall—

7 “(1) award grants to States to pay the adminis-
 8 trative expenses incurred in participating in the Pro-
 9 gram; and

10 “(2) make a commitment to award Federal Pell
 11 Grants to eligible students in accordance with this
 12 section.

13 “(b) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Program shall
 14 meet the following requirements:

15 “(1) ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A student shall be eli-
 17 gible to receive a commitment from the Sec-
 18 retary to receive a Federal Pell Grant early in
 19 the student’s academic career if the student—

20 “(i) is in any of grades 8 through 12;
 21 and

22 “(ii) is a member of a household re-
 23 ceiving assistance under the supplemental
 24 nutrition assistance program established
 25 under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
 26 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).

1 “(2) FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT.—

2 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
3 subparagraph (B), each eligible student who
4 participates in the Program shall receive a com-
5 mitment from the Secretary to receive a Fed-
6 eral Pell Grant during the first 2 academic
7 years that the student is in attendance at an in-
8 stitution of higher education as an under-
9 graduate student, if the student—

10 “(i) applies for Federal financial aid
11 (via the FAFSA) for the award year that
12 the student will be in attendance at an in-
13 stitution of higher education; and

14 “(ii) enrolls at such institution of
15 higher education—

16 “(I) not later than 1 year after
17 such student receives a secondary
18 school diploma or its recognized equiv-
19 alent; or

20 “(II) if such student becomes a
21 member of the Armed Forces, not
22 later than 3 years after such student
23 is discharged, separated, or released
24 from the Armed Forces.

25 “(B) CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY.—

1 “(i) IN GENERAL.—If an eligible stu-
2 dent receives a commitment from the Sec-
3 retary to receive a Federal Pell Grant dur-
4 ing the first 2 academic years that the stu-
5 dent is in attendance at an institution of
6 higher education as an undergraduate stu-
7 dent and the student is not a member of
8 a household receiving assistance under the
9 supplemental nutrition assistance program
10 established under the Food and Nutrition
11 Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) at the
12 time of the FAFSA application described
13 in subparagraph (A)(i), then such student
14 shall not receive a Federal Pell Grant pur-
15 suant to the commitment under this sec-
16 tion for the academic year, unless the stu-
17 dent, at the time of such FAFSA applica-
18 tion, is a member of a household that is el-
19 igible for benefits under—

20 “(I) the supplemental security in-
21 come program under title XVI of the
22 Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1381
23 et seq.);

24 “(II) a State program funded
25 under the temporary assistance for

1 needy families program under part A
2 of title IV of the Social Security Act
3 (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);

4 “(III) the Medicaid program
5 under title XIX of the Social Security
6 Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.); or

7 “(IV) a means-tested Federal
8 benefit program, not described in sub-
9 clause (I), (II), or (III), that is deter-
10 mined appropriate by the Secretary.

11 “(ii) ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER AID.—

12 A student who does not receive a Federal
13 Pell Grant pursuant to the commitment
14 under this section because such student is
15 not a member of a household receiving as-
16 sistance under the supplemental nutrition
17 assistance program established under the
18 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C.
19 2011 et seq.) at the time such student ap-
20 plies for Federal financial aid (via the
21 FAFSA) and the student is not eligible for
22 benefits under a program described in
23 clause (i), shall continue to be eligible for
24 any other Federal student financial aid for
25 which the student is otherwise eligible.

1 “(C) IDENTIFICATION.—The Secretary
 2 shall identify for each eligible institution, each
 3 eligible student who attends that institution and
 4 participates in the Program, including students
 5 participating in accordance with subparagraph
 6 (B).

7 “(3) APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL PELL GRANT
 8 REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements of section 401
 9 shall apply to Federal Pell Grants awarded pursuant
 10 to this section, except that with respect to each eligi-
 11 ble student who participates in the Program, the
 12 amount of each such eligible student’s Federal Pell
 13 Grant only shall be calculated by deeming such stu-
 14 dent to have an expected family contribution equal
 15 to zero.

16 “(c) STATE APPLICATIONS.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State desiring to par-
 18 ticipate in the Program shall submit an application
 19 to the Secretary at such time and in such manner
 20 as the Secretary may require.

21 “(2) CONTENTS.—Each application shall in-
 22 clude—

23 “(A) a description of the proposed targeted
 24 information campaign for the Program and a
 25 copy of the plan described in subsection (e)(2);

1 “(B) an assurance that the State will fully
2 cooperate with the ongoing evaluation of the
3 Program;

4 “(C) a description of how the State will—
5 “(i) encourage participating students
6 to enroll in rigorous and challenging cur-
7 rricula and coursework, in order to reduce
8 the need for remedial coursework at the
9 postsecondary level;

10 “(ii) increase the number of partici-
11 pating students who—

12 “(I) obtain a secondary school di-
13 ploma; and

14 “(II) complete applications for
15 and enroll in a program of postsec-
16 ondary education;

17 “(iii) introduce participating students
18 to institutions of higher education, through
19 trips and school-based sessions;

20 “(iv) provide participating students
21 with assistance in the admissions and ap-
22 plication process for institutions of higher
23 education or other postsecondary education
24 programs; and

1 “(v) ensure that each participating
 2 student has an educational development
 3 plan; and

4 “(D) such other information as the Sec-
 5 retary may require.

6 “(3) EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.—In
 7 this subsection, the term ‘educational development
 8 plan’ means an individualized plan for a student
 9 that—

10 “(A) contains a series of steps to help pro-
 11 mote the student’s career awareness and explo-
 12 ration; and

13 “(B) assists students in identifying—

14 “(i) career and technical education
 15 programs or programs of study (as those
 16 terms are defined in section 3 of the Carl
 17 D. Perkins Career and Technical Edu-
 18 cation Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302), as in
 19 effect on July 1, 2019); or

20 “(ii) other postsecondary options, in-
 21 cluding baccalaureate and subbacca-
 22 laureate degree programs.

23 “(d) EVALUATION.—

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appro-
 25 priated under subsection (f) for a fiscal year, the

1 Secretary shall reserve not less than 2 percent and
2 not more than 5 percent to award a grant or con-
3 tract to an organization outside the Department for
4 an independent evaluation of the impact of the Pro-
5 gram.

6 “(2) COMPETITIVE BASIS.—The grant or con-
7 tract shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

8 “(3) MATTERS EVALUATED.—The evaluation
9 described in this subsection shall consider metrics
10 established by the Secretary that emphasize college
11 access and success, encouraging low-income students
12 to pursue higher education, and the cost effective-
13 ness of the program.

14 “(4) DISSEMINATION.—The findings of the
15 evaluation shall be widely disseminated to the public
16 by the organization conducting the evaluation as well
17 as by the Secretary.

18 “(e) TARGETED INFORMATION CAMPAIGN.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State receiving a
20 grant under this section shall, in cooperation with
21 the participating local educational agencies within
22 the State and the Secretary, develop a targeted in-
23 formation campaign for the Program.

24 “(2) PLAN.—Each State receiving a grant
25 under this section shall include in the application

1 submitted under subsection (c) a written plan for
2 their proposed targeted information campaign. The
3 plan shall include the following:

4 “(A) OUTREACH.—Outreach to students
5 and their families, at a minimum, at the begin-
6 ning and end of each academic year.

7 “(B) DISTRIBUTION.—How the State
8 plans to provide the outreach described in sub-
9 paragraph (A) and to provide the information
10 described in subparagraph (C).

11 “(C) INFORMATION.—The annual provi-
12 sion by the State to all students and families
13 participating in the Program of information re-
14 garding—

15 “(i) the estimated national and state-
16 wide average higher education institution
17 cost data for each academic year, which
18 cost data shall be disaggregated by—

19 “(I) type of institution, includ-
20 ing—

21 “(aa) 2-year public colleges;

22 “(bb) 4-year public colleges;

23 “(cc) 4-year private colleges;

24 and

1 “(dd) private, for-profit col-
 2 leges; and

3 “(II) component, including—

4 “(aa) tuition and fees; and

5 “(bb) room and board;

6 “(ii) Federal Pell Grants, including—

7 “(I) the maximum Federal Pell
 8 Grant for each academic year;

9 “(II) when and how to apply for
 10 a Federal Pell Grant; and

11 “(III) what the application proc-
 12 ess for a Federal Pell Grant requires;

13 “(iii) State-specific college savings
 14 programs;

15 “(iv) State-based financial aid, includ-
 16 ing State-based merit aid;

17 “(v) Federal financial aid available to
 18 students, including eligibility criteria for
 19 the Federal financial aid and an expla-
 20 nation of the Federal financial aid pro-
 21 grams; and

22 “(vi) financial aid that may be avail-
 23 able from non-governmental sources.

24 “(3) ANNUAL INFORMATION.—The information
 25 described in paragraph (2)(C) shall be provided to

1 eligible students annually for the duration of the
2 students' participation in the Program.

3 “(4) RESERVATION.—Each State receiving a
4 grant under this section shall reserve not less than
5 10 percent of the grant funds received each fiscal
6 year to carry out the targeted information campaign
7 described in this subsection.

8 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
9 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
10 such sums as may be necessary.”.

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