

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2406

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish the National Health Service Corps Rural Provider Loan Repayment Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 31, 2019

Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. JONES, and Ms. MURKOWSKI) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to establish the National Health Service Corps Rural Provider Loan Repayment Program, 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 “Rural America Health
5 Corps Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS RURAL PRO-**
2 **VIDER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.**

3 Subpart III of part D of title III of the Public Health
4 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254l et seq.) is amended by adding
5 at the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 3380. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE CORPS RURAL**
7 **PROVIDER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM.**

8 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

9 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall estab-
10 lish a demonstration project to provide for the par-
11 ticipation in the Loan Repayment Program de-
12 scribed in section 338B of individuals who are eligi-
13 ble for such program, subject to subsection (b), and
14 who agree to complete their service obligation in a
15 health professional shortage area that is a rural
16 area.

17 “(2) CLARIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL RURAL
18 AREA POSITIONS.—The individuals receiving assist-
19 ance under this subsection shall be in addition to
20 any individuals who are otherwise participating in
21 the Loan Repayment Program described in section
22 338B and who agree to complete their service obli-
23 gation in a health professional shortage area that is
24 a rural area.

25 “(b) PROCEDURE.—

1 “(1) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive as-
2 sistance under subsection (a), with respect to the
3 program described in section 338B, an individual
4 shall—

5 “(A) comply with all rules and require-
6 ments described in such section, except section
7 338B(f)(1)(B)(iv) and as provided in paragraph
8 (2); and

9 “(B) agree to serve for a time period equal
10 to 5 years, or such longer period as the indi-
11 vidual may agree to, in a health professional
12 shortage area that is a rural area.

13 “(2) REQUIREMENTS.—

14 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise
15 provided in this section, all provisions in this
16 subpart and subpart II pertaining to the admin-
17 istration of, and other requirements with re-
18 spect to, the Loan Repayment Program de-
19 scribed in section 338B shall apply to the dem-
20 onstration project established under this sec-
21 tion.

22 “(B) PAYMENTS FOR YEARS SERVED.—
23 Consistent with subparagraph (A) and sub-
24 sections (f) and (g) of section 338B, the Sec-
25 retary shall pay on behalf of an individual re-

1 ceiving assistance under subsection (a) loans in
2 accordance with such subsection (g) for each
3 year of obligated service the individual contracts
4 to serve under paragraph (1)(B).

5 “(c) DESIGNATIONS.—The demonstration project de-
6 scribed in subsection (a), and any providers who are se-
7 lected to participate in such project, shall not be consid-
8 ered by the Secretary in the designation of health profes-
9 sional shortage areas under section 332 during fiscal years
10 2020 through 2024.

11 “(d) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date
12 of enactment of this section, the Secretary shall submit
13 a report to the relevant committees of Congress that eval-
14 uates the participation of individuals in the demonstration
15 project under subsection (a), the impact of such participa-
16 tion on rural areas, and the benefit and feasibility of per-
17 manently allowing such placements in the Loan Repay-
18 ment Program.

19 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
20 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
21 \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024.

22 “(f) DEFINITION OF RURAL AREA.—For purposes of
23 this section, the term ‘rural area’ has the meaning given
24 such term in section 330J(e).”.

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