

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 144

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 19, 2021

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions

AN ACT

To forestall the loss of research talent by establishing a
temporary early career research fellowship program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Early-Ca-
3 reer Researchers Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) The Nation’s universities and industrial re-
7 search labs are facing unprecedented budget pres-
8 sure as part of the COVID–19 health crisis, result-
9 ing in considerably fewer openings for research and
10 teaching positions.

11 (2) Emergency funding is needed to forestall
12 the loss of research talent likely to occur if early-ca-
13 reer researchers are forced to seek employment out-
14 side of research due to the sharp economic decline
15 caused by the COVID–19 health crisis.

16 (3) The future of America’s defense will rely on
17 advanced technologies to maintain its military supe-
18 riority over its rivals, including China. These tech-
19 nologies will require new levels of scientific and engi-
20 neering aptitude and understanding. Early career re-
21 searchers will play a critical role in the development
22 of these technologies, and the loss of an entire gen-
23 eration of researchers due to the COVID–19 pan-
24 demic will be detrimental to the United States na-
25 tional security.

1 **SEC. 3. EARLY-CAREER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National
3 Science Foundation may establish a 2-year pilot program
4 to award grants to highly qualified early-career investiga-
5 tors to carry out an independent research program at the
6 qualified institution of higher education chosen by such
7 investigator, to last for a period not greater than 2 years.

8 (b) SELECTION PROCESS.—The Director of the Na-
9 tional Science Foundation shall select grantees under sub-
10 section (a) from among citizens, nationals, and lawfully
11 admitted permanent resident aliens of the United States.

12 (c) OUTREACH.—The Director shall conduct program
13 outreach to recruit fellowship applicants—

14 (1) from all regions of the country;

15 (2) from historically underrepresented popu-
16 lations in the fields of science, technology, engineer-
17 ing, and mathematics; and

18 (3) who graduate from or intend to carry out
19 research at a variety of types of institutions of high-
20 er education, including—

21 (A) Historically Black Colleges and Uni-
22 versities;

23 (B) Hispanic-Serving Institutions;

24 (C) Tribal Colleges and Universities; and

1 (D) institutions of higher education that
2 are not among the top 50 institutions in annual
3 Federal funding for research.

4 (d) SPECIAL CONSIDERATION.—The Director shall
5 give special consideration to an application from an indi-
6 vidual who graduated from or is intending to carry out
7 research at an institution of the type listed in subsection
8 (c)(3).

9 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the con-
10 clusion of the second year of the pilot program, the Direc-
11 tor shall submit a report to Congress that includes—

12 (1) statistical summary data on fellowship
13 awardees disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender,
14 age, years since completion of doctoral degree, and
15 institution type;

16 (2) an assessment, drawing on feedback from
17 the research community and other sources of infor-
18 mation, of the effectiveness of the pilot program for
19 mitigating the loss of research talent due to the pan-
20 demic; and

21 (3) if determined effective, a plan for perma-
22 nent implementation of the pilot program.

23 (f) QUALIFIED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION
24 DEFINED.—The term “qualified institution of higher edu-
25 cation” has the meaning given the term in section 102

5 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Direc-
6 tor of the National Science Foundation \$250,000,000 for
7 each of fiscal years 2021 through 2022 to carry out the
8 activities in this Act.

Attest: **CHERYL L. JOHNSON,**
Clerk.