To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve programs for minority students in STEM fields, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 31, 2022

Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. TURNER, and Mr. BOWMAN) 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 improve programs for minority students in STEM fields, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Diverse STEM Students Act”. 
SEC. 2. MINORITY SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORIZED USE OF FUNDS.—Section 353(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067c(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “or”;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding the following at the end:

“(C) providing direct financial assistance to students who are underrepresented in STEM; or

“(D) improving institutional capacity to provide—

“(i) guidance counseling and academic advising;

“(ii) work-study and work-based learning opportunities that are aligned to a student’s chosen field of study;

“(iii) faculty, peer, and near-peer mentorship;

“(iv) summer bridge programs;

“(v) undergraduate research opportunities; or

“(vi) individualized academic support and tutoring.”; and
in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking “or”;

(B) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period and inserting “; or”; and

(C) by adding the following at the end:

“(E) any of the activities described in subparagraphs (A) through (D) of paragraph (1).”.

(b) STEM FIELDS.—Section 356 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 is amended by striking “science” and inserting “science (including computer science)”.

c) CROSS-PROGRAM AND CROSS-AGENCY COOPERATION.—Section 363 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067i) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 363. CROSS-PROGRAM AND CROSS-AGENCY COOPERATION.

“(a) In General.—The Secretary shall cooperate and consult with other programs within the Department and within Federal, State, and private agencies which carry out programs to improve the quality of science, computer science, mathematics, and engineering education.

“(b) Report.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of Supporting Diverse STEM Students Act, the Secretary shall, in consultation with all Federal agencies that have STEM education activities, prepare and submit to the authorizing committees a coordination
strategy report on expanding access and opportunity for
postsecondary students who are underrepresented in
science and engineering that—

“(1) outlines efforts to coordinate Federal grant
programs for these populations to more effectively
achieve the Federal Government’s objective to diver-
sify the STEM fields; and

“(2) outlines strategies to align Federal Gov-
ernment research opportunities, internships, and de-
ferred hiring programs from minority institutions re-
ceiving a grant under this part for students who are
underrepresented in science and engineering.”.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—Section 365 of the Higher Edu-
cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067k) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “science and
engineering” and inserting “STEM”;

(2) by striking paragraph (4) and redesignating
paragraphs (5) through (9) as paragraphs (4)
through (8), respectively;

(3) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “science and engineering”
and inserting “STEM”; and

(B) by striking “scientists and engineers”
in both places and inserting “individuals in
STEM”; and
(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(9) STEM.—The term ‘STEM’ means the fields of science (including computer science), technology, engineering, and mathematics as described in section 356(a).”.

(e) OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 480(i) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087vv(i)), as amended by section 702 of the FAFSA Simplification Act (title VII of division FF of Public Law 116–260), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(6) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), direct financial assistance provided to the student under section 353(b)(1)(C), shall not be treated as other financial assistance for purposes of section 471(3).”.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023, and as if included in the FAFSA Simplification Act (title VII of division FF of Public Law 116–260).