H. R. 9566

To provide grants to States to support State efforts to increase teacher salaries, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 14, 2022

Ms. Wilson of Florida (for herself, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Thompson of Mississippi, Ms. Adams, Mr. Takano, Mr. Evans, Mrs. Cherfilus-McCormick, Ms. DeLauro, and Ms. Pressley) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To provide grants to States to support State efforts to increase teacher salaries, 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 “American Teacher Act”.

SEC. 2. GRANTS TO SUPPORT STATE EFFORTS TO INCREASE TEACHER SALARIES.

(a) Teacher Salary Incentive Grants.—
(1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to ensure that each teacher who is employed full-time at a qualifying school in a State earns an annual salary for any year of employment of not less than $60,000 (adjusted for inflation).

(2) GRANTS FOR MINIMUM SALARY THRESHOLD.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made available to carry out this section, the Secretary of Education shall award 4-year grants to States. To be eligible to receive such a grant, the State educational agency shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(B) REQUIRED ASSURANCES.—As a requirement for a State to receive funds under this section, the Secretary shall require the State to provide an assurance in such application that—

(i) if necessary to achieve the purpose of this section, the State will enact and enforce legislation to establish a statewide teacher salary schedule or otherwise to es-
establish minimum teacher salary requirements;

(ii) each teacher described in paragraph (1) will be compensated on a salary basis at an annual rate per school year that is not less than the salary threshold described in subsection (b);

(iii) each teacher who is employed part-time at a qualifying school in a State earns an annual salary that is proportionately reduced from the salary threshold described in subsection (b); and

(iv) priority will be given to local educational agencies in accordance with subparagraph (C)(ii).

(C) SUBGRANTS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—A State awarded a grant under this section shall use not less than 85 percent of the grant funds to award subgrants to local educational agencies to carry out the purpose of this section.

(ii) PRIORITIES.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—The State educational agency, in allocating
funds to local educational agencies
under this section, shall give priority
to local educational agencies—

(aa) serving greater numbers or percentages of children
from low-income families; or

(bb) with respect to which
all of the schools served by the
local educational agency are des-
ignated with a locale code of 41,
42, or 43, as determined by the
Secretary.

(II) LOW-INCOME FAMILY.—For
purposes of subclause (I)(aa), the
term “low-income family” means a
family—

(aa) in which the children
are eligible for a free or reduced-
price lunch under the Richard B.
Russell National School Lunch
Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.);

(bb) receiving assistance
under the program of block
grants to States for temporary
assistance for needy families es-
established under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.); or

(cc) in which the children are eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

(b) Salary Threshold.—

(1) In general.—For school year 2024–2025, the base minimum salary dollar amount shall be $60,000.

(2) Inflation Adjustment.—For school year 2025–2026 and each succeeding school year, the dollar amount referred to in paragraph (1) shall be deemed to refer to the dollar amount calculated under this subsection for the preceding school year, increased by a percentage equal to the annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Department of Labor for the most recent calendar year.

(e) Supplement, Not Supplant.—

(1) In general.—Grant funds received under this section shall be used to supplement and not
supplant other Federal, State, and local public funds that would, in the absence of such Federal funds, be made available for teacher pay.

(2) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—A State educational agency or local educational agency shall not reduce or adjust any teacher pay or teacher loan forgiveness program due to the eligibility of teachers within the jurisdiction of such agency for pay supplementation under this section.

(3) COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION TO SECRETARY.—Each State educational agency and local educational agency, upon request by the Secretary, shall demonstrate that the methodology used to allocate teacher pay and teacher loan forgiveness (if applicable) to teachers and qualifying schools ensures that each such teacher and school receives the same State and local funds for teacher compensation it would receive if this Act had not been enacted.

SEC. 3. ENHANCED AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF TEACHING PROFESSION.

The Secretary may reserve not more than 4 percent of the funds appropriated under section 5 to carry out a national campaign—

(1) to increase awareness about the importance of teachers and the value of the teaching profession;
(2) to encourage secondary school and college students to consider teaching as a professional ca-
reer; and

(3) to diversify the pool of individuals who enter the teaching profession.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ESEA DEFINITIONS.—The terms “elemen-
tary school”, “local educational agency”, “secondary school”, “Secretary”, “State”, and “State edu-
cational agency” have the meanings given such terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Sec-

(2) QUALIFYING SCHOOL.—The term “quali-
fying school” means, with respect to any school year, is a public elementary school or a public secondary school.

(3) TEACHER.—The term “teacher” means an individual who—

(A) is a teacher of record who provides di-
rect classroom teaching (or classroom-type teaching in a nonclassroom setting) in a quali-
fying school for not less than the normal or statutory number of hours of work for a full-
time or part-time teacher over a complete
school year (as determined by the State in which the school is located); and

(B) meets the applicable requirements for State certification and licensure in the State in which such school is located in the subject area in which the individual is the teacher of record.

(4) TEACHER OF RECORD.—The term “teacher of record” means a teacher who has been assigned the responsibility for specified pupils’ learning in a grade, subject, or course as reflected on the school’s official record of attendance.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2024 through 2028.