

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2516

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to prohibit political litmus tests in accreditation of institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 31, 2025

Mr. OWENS (for himself, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. ROSE, Mr. BABIN, Mr. ONDER, Mr. MOORE of West Virginia, and Mr. MESSMER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to prohibit political litmus tests in accreditation of institutions of higher education, 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 title may be cited as the “Accreditation for Col-
5 lege Excellence Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON POLITICAL LITMUS TESTS IN AC-**
2 **CREDITATION OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER**
3 **EDUCATION.**

4 (a) OPERATING PROCEDURES REQUIRED.—Section
5 496(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
6 1099b(c)) is amended—

7 (1) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph
8 (8);

9 (2) in paragraph (9), by striking the period at
10 the end and inserting “; and”; and

11 (3) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(10) confirms that the standards for accredita-
13 tion of the agency or association do not—

14 “(A) except as provided in subparagraph
15 (B)—

16 “(i) require, encourage, or coerce any
17 institution to—

18 “(I) support, oppose, or commit
19 to supporting or opposing—

20 “(aa) a specific partisan, po-
21 litical, or ideological viewpoint or
22 belief or set of such viewpoints or
23 beliefs; or

24 “(bb) a specific viewpoint or
25 belief or set of viewpoints or be-

1 liefs on social, cultural, or polit-
2 ical issues; or

3 “(II) support or commit to sup-
4 porting the disparate treatment of any
5 individual or group of individuals on
6 the basis of any protected class under
7 Federal civil rights law, except as re-
8 quired by Federal law or a court
9 order; or

10 “(ii) assess an institution’s or pro-
11 gram of study’s commitment to any ide-
12 ology, belief, or viewpoint;

13 “(B) prohibit an institution—

14 “(i) from having a religious mission,
15 operating as a religious institution, or
16 being controlled by a religious organization
17 (in a manner described in paragraph (1),
18 (2), (3), (4), (5), or (6) of section
19 106.12(c) of title 34, Code of Federal Reg-
20 ulations (as in effect on the date of the en-
21 actment of this paragraph)), or from re-
22 quiring an applicant, student, employee, or
23 independent contractor (such as an adjunct
24 professor) of such an institution to—

1 “(I) provide or adhere to a state-
2 ment of faith; or

3 “(II) adhere to a code of conduct
4 consistent with the stated religious
5 mission of such institution or the reli-
6 gious tenets of such organization; or

7 “(ii) from requiring an applicant, stu-
8 dent, employee, or contractor to take an
9 oath to uphold the Constitution of the
10 United States; or

11 “(C) require, encourage, or coerce an insti-
12 tution of higher education to violate any right
13 protected by the Constitution.”.

14 (b) LIMITATION ON SCOPE OF CRITERIA.—Section
15 496(g) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
16 1099b(g)) is amended to read as follows:

17 “(g) LIMITATION ON SCOPE OF CRITERIA.—

18 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall not es-
19 tablish criteria for accrediting agencies or associa-
20 tions that are not required by this section.

21 “(2) INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY.—An institu-
22 tion of higher education shall be eligible for partici-
23 pation in programs under this title if the institution
24 is in compliance with the standards of its accrediting
25 agency or association that assess the institution in

1 accordance with subsection (a)(5), regardless of any
2 additional standards adopted by the agency or asso-
3 ciation for purposes unrelated to participation in
4 programs under this title.”.

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