

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2047

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make demonstration grants to eligible local educational agencies for the purpose of reducing the student-to-school nurse ratio in public elementary schools and secondary schools.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 31, 2012

Mr. SCHUMER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make demonstration grants to eligible local educational agencies for the purpose of reducing the student-to-school nurse ratio in public elementary schools and secondary schools.

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 “Student-to-School
5 Nurse Ratio Improvement Act of 2012”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The American Academy of Pediatrics em-
2 phasizes the crucial role school nurses have in the
3 seamless provision of comprehensive health services
4 to children and youth, as well as in the development
5 of a coordinated school health program.

6 (2) The school nurse functions as a leader and
7 the coordinator of the school health services team,
8 facilitating access to a medical home for each child
9 and supporting school achievement.

10 (3) Recent national data indicates 45 percent of
11 public schools have a school nurse all day, every day,
12 while another 30 percent of schools have a school
13 nurse who works part time in 1 or more schools.

14 (4) The American Nurses Association has re-
15 ported that when there is no registered nurse on the
16 school premises, the responsibility to administer the
17 necessary medications and treatments and appro-
18 priate monitoring of the children falls on the shoul-
19 ders of administrators, educators, and staff who are
20 ill-prepared to perform these tasks.

21 (5) Statistics from the National Center for
22 Education Statistics indicate that of the 52,000,000
23 children who currently spend their day in schools, 16
24 percent have chronic physical, emotional, or other
25 health problems.

1 (6) A recent study indicated that from 2002 to
2 2008 the percentage of children in special education
3 classes with health impairments, due to chronic or
4 acute health problems, increased 60 percent. Within
5 this group, the rate of autism has doubled since
6 2002.

7 (7) In the past 10 years, the prevalence of asth-
8 ma has increased 40 percent and the incidence of di-
9 abetes has increased nearly 50 percent.

10 (8) According to a 2008 report by the American
11 Academy of Pediatrics, students face increased so-
12 cial issues as well as the need for preventative serv-
13 ices and interventions for acute and chronic health
14 issues.

15 (9) The Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
16 vention reports that, in 2008, 8.9 percent of children
17 were without health insurance, and with more than
18 1,300,000 homeless children in the United States,
19 schools have become the only source of health care
20 for many children and adolescents.

21 (10) Communicable and infectious diseases ac-
22 count for millions of school days lost each year.
23 There is reported evidence that school nurses have
24 a positive impact on immunization rates, resulting in
25 fewer parent-requested exemptions.

1 (11) A recent study showed that students with
 2 health concerns attended to by school nurses were
 3 able to return to class 95 percent of the time, while
 4 students attended to by non-licensed staff were only
 5 able to return to class 82 percent of the time.

6 (12) Using a formula-based approach for deter-
 7 mining a balanced student-to-school nurse ratio of-
 8 fers a reasonable means for achieving better student
 9 outcomes.

10 **SEC. 3. REDUCING STUDENT-TO-SCHOOL NURSE RATIOS.**

11 (a) DEMONSTRATION GRANTS.—

12 (1) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of
 13 Education, in consultation with the Secretary of
 14 Health and Human Services and the Director of the
 15 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, may
 16 make demonstration grants to eligible local edu-
 17 cational agencies for the purpose of reducing the
 18 student-to-school nurse ratio in public elementary
 19 schools and secondary schools.

20 (2) APPLICATION.—

21 (A) IN GENERAL.—To receive a grant
 22 under this section, an eligible local educational
 23 agency shall submit an application to the Sec-
 24 retary of Education at such time, in such man-

1 ner, and containing such information as the
2 Secretary of Education may require.

3 (B) CURRENT RATIOS.—The application
4 shall include information with respect to the
5 current ratios of students-to-school nurses in
6 each of the public elementary schools and sec-
7 ondary schools served by the eligible local edu-
8 cational agency.

9 (3) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this
10 section, the Secretary of Education shall give pri-
11 ority to applications submitted by high-need local
12 educational agencies that demonstrate the greatest
13 need for new or additional nursing services among
14 students in the public elementary schools and sec-
15 ondary schools served by such local educational
16 agency.

17 (4) MATCHING FUNDS.—The Secretary of Edu-
18 cation may require local educational agencies receiv-
19 ing grants under this section to provide matching
20 funds from non-Federal sources, and shall permit
21 such local educational agencies to match funds in
22 whole or in part with in-kind contributions.

23 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 24 months after the
24 date on which a grant is first made to an eligible local
25 educational agency under this section, the Secretary of

1 Education shall submit to Congress a report on the results
2 of the demonstration grant program carried out under this
3 section, including an evaluation of—

4 (1) the effectiveness of the program in reducing
5 the student-to-school nurse ratios described in sub-
6 section (a)(1); and

7 (2) how any resulting enhancement of student
8 health may impact student learning.

9 (c) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—The terms “elementary
11 school”, “local educational agency”, “poverty line”,
12 and “secondary school” have the meanings given to
13 those terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and
14 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

15 (2) ELIGIBLE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—
16 The term “eligible local educational agency” means
17 a local educational agency in which the student-to-
18 school nurse ratio in each public elementary school
19 and secondary school served by the agency is 750 or
20 more students to 1 school nurse.

21 (3) HIGH-NEED LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGEN-
22 CY.—The term “high-need local educational agency”
23 means a local educational agency—

1 (A) that serves not fewer than 10,000 chil-
2 dren from families with incomes below the pov-
3 erty line; or

4 (B) for which not less than 20 percent of
5 the children served by the agency are from fam-
6 ilies with incomes below the poverty line.

7 (4) NURSE.—The term “nurse” means a li-
8 censed nurse, as defined under State law.

9 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
10 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
11 necessary to carry out this section for each of the fiscal
12 years 2012 through 2016.

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