

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2

To support national training, technical assistance, and resource centers, to ensure that all individuals with significant expressive communication disabilities have access to the augmentative and alternative communication the individuals need to interact with others, in order to learn, work, socialize, and take advantage of all aspects of life in the United States.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 17, 2022

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To support national training, technical assistance, and resource centers, to ensure that all individuals with significant expressive communication disabilities have access to the augmentative and alternative communication the individuals need to interact with others, in order to learn, work, socialize, and take advantage of all aspects of life in the United States.

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 “Augmentative and Al-  
3 ternative Communication Centers to Establish National  
4 Training Act” or the “AACCENT Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6       Congress makes the following findings:

7           (1) Communication is a basic human need and  
8       fundamental right, and is essential to self-deter-  
9       mination, social inclusion, and emotional and phys-  
10      ical well-being. In enacting a provision of the Ameri-  
11      cans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (referred to in  
12      this section as the “ADA”), Congress recognized  
13      that “physical or mental disabilities in no way di-  
14      minish a person’s right to fully participate in all as-  
15      pects of society,” and that “the discriminatory ef-  
16      fects of communication barriers” are a form of dis-  
17      crimination.

18           (2) Three decades after the passage of the  
19      ADA, Americans with significant expressive commu-  
20      nication disabilities still experience discrimination in  
21      the form of communication barriers, institutionaliza-  
22      tion, segregation, and relegation to lesser services,  
23      programs, activities, benefits, jobs, or other opportu-  
24      nities compared to Americans without significant ex-  
25      pressive communication disabilities.

1           (3) Data about augmentative and alternative  
2           communication is lacking, but it is estimated there  
3           are at least 4,000,000 people in the United States  
4           who cannot reliably meet their daily communication  
5           needs using natural speech.

6           (4) The population of individuals with signifi-  
7           cant expressive communication difficulties is at sub-  
8           stantial risk for limited education, unemployment,  
9           poor health outcomes, poverty, and low quality of  
10          life.

11          (5) People can acquire a significant expressive  
12          communication disability and need augmentative and  
13          alternative communication as a result of many  
14          health and developmental conditions at all stages of  
15          life.

16          (6) Research indicates that individuals who be-  
17          long to racial or ethnic minority communities face a  
18          greater likelihood of being born with or acquiring ex-  
19          pressive communication disabilities, as well as added  
20          difficulties in obtaining intervention services, includ-  
21          ing augmentative and alternative communication.

22          (7) Individuals with significant expressive com-  
23          munication disabilities, schools, families, employers,  
24          direct support providers, health care providers, the  
25          justice system, and the general public need more in-

1       formation about how to effectively deploy, imple-  
 2       ment, and ensure continued access to robust commu-  
 3       nication tools, services, and other supports for indi-  
 4       viduals with significant expressive communication  
 5       disabilities.

6           (8) The lived experiences and writings of indi-  
 7       viduals with significant expressive communication  
 8       disabilities demonstrate the positive impact aug-  
 9       mentative and alternative communication has on  
 10      their lives. These lived experiences and writings also  
 11      illustrate the harm that results from denying aug-  
 12      mentative and alternative communication to those  
 13      who need it.

14          (9) The leadership of individuals with signifi-  
 15      cant expressive communication disabilities is critical  
 16      in crafting and implementing effective policies and  
 17      programs affecting their lives, including policies and  
 18      programs regarding augmentative and alternative  
 19      communication.

20          (10) The freedoms of expression, and to be un-  
 21      derstood, are essential to both democracy and to in-  
 22      dividual well-being. Individuals with significant ex-  
 23      pressive communication disabilities must be afforded  
 24      equal rights, opportunities, strategies, technologies,  
 25      services, and other supports to effectively express

1       themselves and participate in their communities and  
 2       in democracy.

3   **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

4       The purpose of this Act is to work toward eliminating  
 5   the continued discrimination, isolation, marginalization,  
 6   and denial of equal opportunity of individuals with signifi-  
 7   cant expressive communication disabilities by providing for  
 8   comprehensive national training, technical assistance, and  
 9   resource centers to improve access to—

- 10           (1) a full range of augmentative and alternative  
 11       communication;
- 12           (2) equal opportunity;
- 13           (3) awareness and implementation of relevant  
 14       laws, policies, and practices;
- 15           (4) leadership and self-advocacy skills;
- 16           (5) capacity, in the case of individuals with sig-  
 17       nificant expressive communication disabilities, edu-  
 18       cators, professionals, and families;
- 19           (6) national statistical data; and
- 20           (7) societal awareness.

21   **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

22       In this Act:

- 23           (1) **ADVISORY COUNCIL.**—The term “advisory  
 24       council” means an 11-person advisory council that—

1 (A) provides guidance, recommendations,  
2 and oversight to an eligible entity;

3 (B) is comprised exclusively of individuals  
4 with significant expressive communication dis-  
5 abilities who collectively have diverse—

6 (i) educational and professional back-  
7 grounds;

8 (ii) racial, ethnic, gender, and lin-  
9 guistic identities;

10 (iii) disabilities, including intellectual  
11 disabilities, ages, and geographic locations;

12 (iv) levels of income; and

13 (v) forms of augmentative and alter-  
14 native communication relied upon; and

15 (C) is subject to each of the following con-  
16 ditions:

17 (i) The initial council members shall  
18 be identified in the grant application by  
19 the partners of the eligible entity.

20 (ii) Each member of the advisory  
21 council shall be appointed for a period of  
22 5 years.

23 (iii) The Chair and Vice Chair of the  
24 council shall be selected by the council  
25 members at the first meeting and there-

1 after as the council determines to be ap-  
 2 propriate.

3 (iv) The council shall fill any vacancy  
 4 in accordance with section 7(b)(8)(C).

5 (2) AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMU-  
 6 NICATION.—The term “augmentative and alternative  
 7 communication” means any tool, method, tech-  
 8 nology, strategy, service, training, coaching, and  
 9 other support used to supplement or replace speech.

10 (3) COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOY-  
 11 MENT.—The term “competitive integrated employ-  
 12 ment” has the meaning given the term in section 7  
 13 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 705).

14 (4) DISABILITY.—The term “disability” has the  
 15 meaning given the term in section 3 of the Ameri-  
 16 cans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.  
 17 12102).

18 (5) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-  
 19 ty” means a partnership of at least 2 organiza-  
 20 tions—

21 (A) for which the controlling partner of the  
 22 partnership is a nonprofit organization  
 23 headquartered in the United States that vests  
 24 power and authority in individuals with signifi-  
 25 cant expressive communication disabilities in

terms of management, staffing, decisionmaking,  
operation, and provision of services;

(B) that includes at least one other organi-  
zation headquartered in the United States that  
is either an institution of higher education or  
an association of professional service providers  
or educators in the field of significant expres-  
sive communication disabilities;

(C) that has a cross-disability and cross-  
generational focus;

(D) that is advised by an advisory council;

(E) that has adopted a mission that values  
equal opportunity and the fundamental right of  
communication access, and operating principles  
that respect the rights of individuals with sig-  
nificant expressive communication disabilities to  
express themselves in the manner of their  
choosing; and

(F) of which the organizational members,  
collectively—

(i) have knowledge, experience, and  
capacity in conducting training, technical  
assistance, or knowledge dissemination re-  
lated to the priority activities described in  
section 6;

1 (ii) have experience working directly  
2 with individuals with significant expressive  
3 communication disabilities in association  
4 with—

5 (I) early intervention programs,  
6 early childhood programs, elementary  
7 or secondary schools, or postsecondary  
8 education programs; or

9 (II) 2 or more types of entities  
10 from among—

11 (aa) centers for independent  
12 living authorized under part C of  
13 title VII of the Rehabilitation Act  
14 of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 796f et seq.);

15 (bb) home and community-  
16 based service providers;

17 (cc) employers;

18 (dd) health care providers;

19 (ee) protection and advocacy  
20 organizations;

21 (ff) aging networks;

22 (gg) caregiver organizations;

23 or

24 (hh) State, Tribal, or local  
25 government agencies; and

1 (iii) have experience developing and  
 2 maintaining collaborative working relation-  
 3 ships among disability-led advocacy organi-  
 4 zations, institutions of higher education,  
 5 professional associations, or caregiver orga-  
 6 nizations.

7 (6) EVIDENCE-BASED.—The term “evidence-  
 8 based”, used with respect to assistance that is  
 9 knowledge, a resource, training, or technical assist-  
 10 ance, means assistance—

11 (A) that demonstrates a rationale based on  
 12 a high-quality research finding or positive eval-  
 13 uation that such assistance is likely to improve  
 14 a communication outcome or other relevant out-  
 15 come; and

16 (B) for which ongoing efforts are made to  
 17 examine the effects of the assistance.

18 (7) INDIVIDUAL WITH SIGNIFICANT EXPRES-  
 19 SIVE COMMUNICATION DISABILITIES.—The term “in-  
 20 dividual with significant expressive communication  
 21 disabilities” means an individual of any age—

22 (A) who has 1 or more real or perceived  
 23 significant expressive communication disabilities  
 24 and may have other disabilities; and

1 (B) whose disabilities result in the need  
 2 for, or benefit from, augmentative and alter-  
 3 native communication and other supports to en-  
 4 able the individual to communicate and to aid  
 5 the individual in participating in 1 or more as-  
 6 pects of life.

7 (8) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The  
 8 term “institution of higher education” has the  
 9 meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the  
 10 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

11 (9) NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER.—The term  
 12 “national resource center” means a National Re-  
 13 source Center on Augmentative and Alternative  
 14 Communication referred to in section 5(a).

15 (10) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”  
 16 means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

17 (11) SIGNIFICANT EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICA-  
 18 TION DISABILITY.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “significant  
 20 expressive communication disability” means any  
 21 disability, whether congenital, developmental, or  
 22 acquired at any point in life, that prevents or  
 23 significantly limits an individual from under-  
 24 standing or being understood using spoken  
 25 words, resulting in the individual’s need for or

1 benefit from augmentative and alternative com-  
2 munication.

3 (B) APPLICATION.—The term does not  
4 apply to an individual whose primary commu-  
5 nication disability is visual or auditory in na-  
6 ture, but does apply to an individual with a dis-  
7 ability described in subparagraph (A) who also  
8 has a visual or auditory communication dis-  
9 ability and who may communicate using sign  
10 language.

11 (12) STATE.—The term “State” means the 50  
12 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth  
13 of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands,  
14 Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of  
15 the Northern Mariana Islands.

16 **SEC. 5. GRANTS.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award 3  
18 grants through an open competition to eligible entities,  
19 with applications approved under section 7, to create,  
20 maintain, and administer a network of National Resource  
21 Centers on Augmentative and Alternative Communication.  
22 Each national resource center shall be a comprehensive  
23 training, technical assistance, and resource center created  
24 to work toward eliminating the continued discrimination  
25 against, isolation of, marginalization of, and denial of ef-

1 fective communication for and equal opportunity of, indi-  
2 viduals with significant expressive communication disabil-  
3 ities, through activities including the priority activities de-  
4 scribed in section 6.

5 (b) AWARDS FOR MULTIPLE CENTERS.—The Sec-  
6 retary shall award the grants for national resource centers  
7 in 3 geographically diverse locations, and shall designate  
8 one of the centers as the lead administrative center.

9 (c) LEAD ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER.—The lead ad-  
10 ministrative center shall coordinate—

11 (1) all activities of the centers;

12 (2) specialization of priorities among the cen-  
13 ters;

14 (3) dissemination of information among the  
15 centers;

16 (4) responses of the centers to the Secretary;  
17 and

18 (5) ensuring that the full range of individuals  
19 with significant expressive communication disabil-  
20 ities is served by the centers.

21 (d) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall, to the extent  
22 practicable, award the 3 grants in amounts that total not  
23 more than \$9,000,000 per year of a period described in  
24 subsection (e).

1 (e) PERIODS.—The Secretary shall award each grant  
 2 for a period of 5 years, through an open competition held  
 3 initially and at the end of each 5-year period. An eligible  
 4 entity that receives a grant under this section may reapply  
 5 for such a grant at the end of the grant period.

6 **SEC. 6. NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER PRIORITY ACTIVI-**  
 7 **TIES.**

8 The priority activities of a national resource center  
 9 shall be to—

10 (1) increase access to and effective implementa-  
 11 tion of the full range of augmentative and alter-  
 12 native communication for all individuals with signifi-  
 13 cant expressive communication disabilities in the  
 14 United States, regardless of age, race, ethnicity,  
 15 gender, gender identity, LGBTQ+ status, immigra-  
 16 tion status, educational achievement, socioeconomic  
 17 condition, primary language, nature or severity of  
 18 disability, location of residence, and age of onset of  
 19 the significant expressive communication disability;

20 (2) increase the capacity of individuals with sig-  
 21 nificant expressive communication disabilities, edu-  
 22 cators, professional service providers, families, and  
 23 direct support professionals to support individuals  
 24 with significant expressive communication disabil-  
 25 ities by creating and disseminating evidence-based

1 knowledge, resources, training and technical assist-  
 2 ance, and recommended practices in ensuring indi-  
 3 viduals with significant expressive communication  
 4 disabilities have the tools and other supports nec-  
 5 essary to exercise self-determination and effectively  
 6 access and participate in all aspects of life, including  
 7 education, employment, health care, and community  
 8 living;

9 (3) promote awareness and implementation of  
 10 the laws, regulations, policies, practices, procedures,  
 11 and systems that facilitate access to the full range  
 12 of augmentative and alternative communication and  
 13 promote equal access and opportunity for individuals  
 14 with significant expressive communication disabili-  
 15 ties;

16 (4) support and enhance the skills and leader-  
 17 ship of individuals with significant expressive com-  
 18 munication disabilities and their families to advocate  
 19 for the rights of the individuals to effective commu-  
 20 nication, education, self-determination, access to jus-  
 21 tice, and equal opportunity and participation in all  
 22 aspects of life;

23 (5) support the improved collection, availability,  
 24 and dissemination of demographic and characteristic  
 25 data, with a cross-disability and cross-generational

1 focus, regarding individuals with significant expres-  
 2 sive communication disabilities in the United States,  
 3 the barriers the individuals experience to meaningful  
 4 access to augmentative and alternative communica-  
 5 tion, and the unmet communication support and  
 6 other needs of this population; and

7 (6) increase societal awareness and knowledge  
 8 about individuals with significant expressive commu-  
 9 nication disabilities and the importance of, need for,  
 10 benefits of, and rights to meaningful access to effec-  
 11 tive communication tools and other supports in all  
 12 aspects of community and life.

### 13 **SEC. 7. APPLICATIONS.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—To be qualified to receive a grant  
 15 under section 5, an eligible entity shall submit an applica-  
 16 tion to the Secretary at such time and in such manner  
 17 as the Secretary may require.

18 (b) CONTENTS.—Each such application from an eligi-  
 19 ble entity shall include, at a minimum, each of the fol-  
 20 lowing:

21 (1) A description of the experience of each part-  
 22 ner organization in the entity in providing training,  
 23 information, advocacy, and support related to aug-  
 24 mentative and alternative communication and indi-

viduals with significant expressive communication disabilities.

(2) A description of each partner organization's experience in providing training, information, advocacy, and support related to augmentative and alternative communication and to individuals with significant expressive communication disabilities, to—

(A) early intervention specialists;

(B) elementary education, secondary education, postsecondary education, and specialized instructional support personnel as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801);

(C) caregiver groups;

(D) providers of home and community-based services for adults;

(E) health care providers and educators;

(F) employers;

(G) providers of services to older adults;

(H) law enforcement agencies, courts, offices of district attorneys, and other public and private security agencies and businesses;

(I) institutional long-term care services and support providers;

(J) nursing home providers; and

1 (K) other stakeholders.

2 (3) A description of each partner organization's  
3 experience working with State, local, or Tribal gov-  
4 ernment agencies in providing training, information,  
5 and support related to augmentative and alternative  
6 communication for full expression and individuals  
7 with significant expressive communication disabili-  
8 ties.

9 (4) A description of each partner organization's  
10 prior partnerships with disability-led organizations  
11 focused on augmentative and alternative communica-  
12 tion and individuals with significant expressive com-  
13 munication disabilities.

14 (5) Evidence of how the applicant satisfies the  
15 requirements of section 4(5).

16 (6) A description of the applicant's plan to en-  
17 sure that the applicant will provide training, tech-  
18 nical assistance, and information to target audi-  
19 ences, especially those audiences in need of knowl-  
20 edge and access to augmentative and alternative  
21 communication.

22 (7) A description of the applicant's plan to im-  
23 plement the priority activities in section 6, including  
24 how the organizational members of the eligible entity

1 will partner, collaborate, and operationalize the ac-  
2 tivities.

3 (8) Advisory council information, including—

4 (A) a description of the advisory council,  
5 including a list of the inaugural members of the  
6 advisory council;

7 (B) an assurance that the Chair and Vice  
8 Chair of the advisory council will be selected by  
9 the advisory council members at the first meet-  
10 ing of the advisory council and thereafter as the  
11 council determines to be appropriate; and

12 (C) an assurance that, in filling a vacancy  
13 on the advisory council, the advisory council  
14 will—

15 (i) solicit nominations from the popu-  
16 lation of augmentative and alternative  
17 communication users;

18 (ii) if there is not more than 1 nomi-  
19 nee for the vacancy, confirm the nominee  
20 as a new member; and

21 (iii) if there is more than 1 nominee  
22 for the vacancy, vote to determine the  
23 nominee to fill the vacancy and subse-  
24 quently confirm the nominee.

1           (9) A description of how other individuals with  
2           significant expressive communication disabilities will  
3           be involved in the governance and operations of the  
4           national resource center involved, especially through  
5           employment of individuals with significant expressive  
6           communication disabilities.

7           (10) A description of how the applicant will de-  
8           sign and make training, technical assistance, and in-  
9           formation available in accessible formats, including  
10          plain language.

11          (11) Assurances that the applicant, acting  
12          through the national resource center, will work with  
13          the stakeholders identified in section 9(d).

14          (12) Assurances that the applicant, acting  
15          through the national resource center, will provide the  
16          Secretary with requested data and information for  
17          purposes of evaluating the grant activities.

18 **SEC. 8. AWARD PRIORITY.**

19          In awarding grants for activities described in this  
20          Act, the Secretary shall give priority to an eligible entity  
21          with at least 1 partner organization that—

22               (1) demonstrates a minimum of 3 years of ex-  
23               perience providing training and technical assistance  
24               and disseminating information related to augment-  
25               ative and alternative communication and individuals

1 with significant expressive communication disabil-  
2 ities, and being otherwise engaged in the priority ac-  
3 tivities described in section 6;

4 (2) demonstrates that individuals with signifi-  
5 cant expressive communication disabilities and those  
6 who use augmentative and alternative communica-  
7 tion are purposefully involved in the governance and  
8 operation of the organization, especially through  
9 their employment in service, delivery, and leadership  
10 positions;

11 (3) demonstrates the ability to collaborate with  
12 disability self-advocacy, education, direct service,  
13 health care, employment, aging, caregiver, and hous-  
14 ing organizations, whether the organizations are  
15 public agencies or private entities; and

16 (4) demonstrates expertise in promoting acces-  
17 sibility and the use of universal design (the latter as  
18 defined in section 103 of the Higher Education Act  
19 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1003)) in providing training and  
20 technical assistance, and information dissemination.

21 **SEC. 9. USE OF FUNDS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that receives a  
23 grant under section 5 shall use the grant funds to manage  
24 and carry out the priority activities described in section

1 6, activities described in this section, and any additional  
 2 activities approved by the Secretary.

3 (b) COORDINATION WITH FEDERAL PROGRAMS.—

4 The work of a national resource center shall link to cur-  
 5 rent and future policy and activities undertaken through-  
 6 out the Federal Government in relation to self-advocacy,  
 7 supported decisionmaking, person-centered planning, com-  
 8 munity living, and competitive integrated employment for  
 9 individuals with disabilities and particularly for individuals  
 10 with the most significant expressive communication dis-  
 11 abilities, for the purpose of increasing—

- 12 (1) success and self-determination in life;
- 13 (2) the provision of inclusive early intervention
- 14 services, elementary education, secondary education,
- 15 and postsecondary education programs;
- 16 (3) competitive integrated employment;
- 17 (4) health, wellness, and personal safety;
- 18 (5) economic security;
- 19 (6) civic engagement;
- 20 (7) community integration; and
- 21 (8) improvement in other aspects of life.

22 (c) INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.—Notwith-  
 23 standing the priority activities described in section 6, a  
 24 national resource center shall ensure information and  
 25 other resources about augmentative and alternative com-

1 munication and individuals with significant expressive  
2 communication disabilities are made available as appro-  
3 priate to—

4 (1) individuals with significant expressive com-  
5 munication disabilities and their families;

6 (2) institutions of higher education;

7 (3) State, Tribal, and local educational agen-  
8 cies;

9 (4) law enforcement agencies, courts, offices of  
10 district attorneys, and other public and private secu-  
11 rity agencies and businesses;

12 (5) national, State, regional, Tribal, and local  
13 employers, to enable businesses to hire into competi-  
14 tive integrated employment more individuals who use  
15 augmentative and alternative communication;

16 (6) national, State, Tribal, and local govern-  
17 ment agencies that provide services and other sup-  
18 ports to individuals with significant expressive com-  
19 munication disabilities, including agencies respon-  
20 sible for emergency preparedness, employment sup-  
21 port, and vocational rehabilitation, agencies respon-  
22 sible for State programs under the Assistive Tech-  
23 nology Act of 1988 (29 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.), agen-  
24 cies responsible for State alternative financing pro-  
25 grams, State agencies responsible for the Medicaid

1 program under title XIX of the Social Security Act  
2 (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.), and the agencies over-  
3 seeing the provision of home and community-based  
4 services;

5 (7) national and local disability and aging advoca-  
6 cacy organizations, including disability self-advocacy  
7 organizations;

8 (8) family support organizations, including the  
9 parent training and information centers supported  
10 under section 671 of the Individuals with Disabilities  
11 Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1471);

12 (9) centers for independent living and Statewide  
13 Independent Living Councils authorized by title VII  
14 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 796 et  
15 seq.);

16 (10) network partners, including the State  
17 Councils on Developmental Disabilities described in  
18 section 125 of the Developmental Disabilities Assist-  
19 ance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C.  
20 15025), the protection and advocacy systems de-  
21 scribed in section 143 of that Act (42 U.S.C.  
22 15043), and University Centers for Excellence in  
23 Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and  
24 Services supported under subtitle D of title I of that

1 Act (42 U.S.C. 15061 et seq.), participating in ac-  
 2 tivities under that Act (42 U.S.C. 15001 et seq.);

3 (11) State agencies and area agencies on aging,  
 4 entities carrying out long-term care ombudsman pro-  
 5 grams, and other entities funded under the Older  
 6 Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.);

7 (12) health care providers and educators, health  
 8 care advocacy organizations, nursing home pro-  
 9 viders, and institutional long-term care facilities;

10 (13) professional organizations and organiza-  
 11 tions that certify preservice training programs; and

12 (14) other groups and entities as identified by  
 13 the eligible entity and the advisory council of the eli-  
 14 gible entity.

15 (d) STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION.—A national re-  
 16 source center shall collaborate with—

17 (1) organizations of individuals with significant  
 18 expressive communication disabilities;

19 (2) disability organizations;

20 (3) entities carrying out State assistive tech-  
 21 nology programs and State alternative financing pro-  
 22 grams;

23 (4) State, Tribal, and local educational agen-  
 24 cies;

1           (5) the councils, systems, and university centers  
2 described in subsection (c)(10);

3           (6) entities carrying out national, State, Tribal  
4 and Native Hawaiian, and local programs authorized  
5 by the Older Americans Act of 1965;

6           (7) the federally funded Rehabilitation Engi-  
7 neering Research Center on Augmentative and Al-  
8 ternative Communication;

9           (8) State agencies responsible for vocational re-  
10 habilitation programs, as defined in section 3 of the  
11 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29  
12 U.S.C. 3102);

13           (9) professional associations whose members  
14 come in contact with and support individuals who  
15 may use augmentative and alternative communica-  
16 tion;

17           (10) local boards, as defined in section 3 of the  
18 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29  
19 U.S.C. 3102); and

20           (11) other State, regional, Tribal, and local en-  
21 tities with the ability to provide support for individ-  
22 uals who need and use augmentative and alternative  
23 communication.

1 **SEC. 10. ANNUAL REPORT.**

2       An eligible entity that receives a grant under section  
 3 5 to support a national resource center shall annually pre-  
 4 pare and submit to the Secretary, the Secretary of Edu-  
 5 cation, and the relevant subcommittees of the Committee  
 6 on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate,  
 7 the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate, and the  
 8 Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Rep-  
 9 resentatives, the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
 10 Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies of the  
 11 Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the Sub-  
 12 committee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Edu-  
 13 cation, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appro-  
 14 priations of the House of Representatives a report con-  
 15 taining, consistent with criteria established by the Sec-  
 16 retary, information on—

17           (1) activities conducted by the national resource  
 18 center to achieve the purpose of this Act;

19           (2) collaboration by the national resource center  
 20 with other entities to achieve the purposes of this  
 21 Act;

22           (3) barriers to and strategies for equitable ac-  
 23 cess to augmentative and alternative communication  
 24 and other supports for individuals who belong to ra-  
 25 cial, ethnic, and linguistic minority communities and  
 26 face a greater likelihood of being born with or ac-

1       quiring significant expressive communication disabil-  
2       ities as well as added difficulties in obtaining effec-  
3       tive augmentative and alternative communication;

4               (4) identified gaps in available demographic and  
5       characteristic data on individuals with significant ex-  
6       pressive communication disabilities in the United  
7       States; and

8               (5) the unmet needs of individuals with signifi-  
9       cant expressive communication disabilities, from di-  
10      verse backgrounds, in the United States and policy  
11      recommendations to address such unmet needs.

12   **SEC. 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

13       There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
14   this Act \$9,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through  
15   2027.

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