

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 10057

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make grants to States to improve the knowledge, credentials, compensation, and professional development of early childhood educators working with children in early childhood education programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 6, 2026

Ms. MENG (for herself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. SIMON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make grants to States to improve the knowledge, credentials, compensation, and professional development of early childhood educators working with children in early childhood education programs, 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 Act may be cited as the “Early Childhood Edu-
5 cator Professional Improvement Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 The purpose of this Act is to provide assistance to
3 States to improve the knowledge, credentials, compensa-
4 tion, and professional development of early childhood edu-
5 cators working with children in early childhood education
6 programs.

7 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

9 (1) **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PRO-**
10 **GRAM.**—The term “early childhood education pro-
11 gram” has the meaning given the term in section
12 812 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
13 U.S.C. 1161i–1).

14 (2) **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**—The
15 term “institution of higher education” has the
16 meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the
17 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

18 **SEC. 4. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

19 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Health and
20 Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of
21 Education, is authorized to award grants to States to im-
22 plement and administer the activities described in section
23 6.

24 (b) **DURATION.**—

25 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Each grant awarded under
26 this Act shall be for a period of 5 years, with fund-

1 ing provided annually subject to the availability of
2 appropriations and continued compliance with the
3 terms of the grant.

4 (2) RENEWAL.—A State awarded a grant under
5 this Act may apply for renewal of the grant at the
6 end of the 5-year grant period. The Secretary may
7 renew the grant if the State demonstrates compli-
8 ance with the requirements of this Act and satisfac-
9 tory program outcomes.

10 **SEC. 5. APPLICATIONS.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Each State desiring a grant under
12 this Act shall submit an application to the Secretary of
13 Health and Human Services—

14 (1) that includes the information described in
15 subsection (b); and

16 (2) at such time, in such manner, and accom-
17 panied by such additional information as the Sec-
18 retary, in consultation with the Secretary of Edu-
19 cation, may reasonably require.

20 (b) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted under
21 subsection (a) shall include a description of the State’s
22 comprehensive early childhood professional development
23 system, including the following:

24 (1) A description of how the State’s system was
25 developed in collaboration with the State Advisory

1 Council on Early Childhood Education and Care
2 designated or established under section 642B of the
3 Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b), the State agency
4 responsible for administering childcare, the State
5 Head Start collaboration director, the State edu-
6 cational agency, institutions of higher education, or-
7 ganizations that represent early childhood educators,
8 child care resource and referral organizations,
9 staffed family child care networks, and credible early
10 childhood education professional organizations.

11 (2) A designation of a State agency to admin-
12 ister the grant program.

13 (3) A description of how the State's comprehen-
14 sive early childhood professional development system
15 provides—

16 (A) an oversight structure for such system;

17 (B) early childhood educator standards
18 and competencies;

19 (C) a career and wage lattice;

20 (D) coordination with State higher edu-
21 cation agencies, higher education accrediting
22 bodies, and accredited 2- and 4-year institutions
23 of higher education;

24 (E) articulation agreements between 2-
25 and 4-year institutions of higher education and

1 credit-bearing opportunities and articulation
2 agreements that recognize prior learning, early
3 childhood educator credentials, and expertise in
4 early childhood education and development;

5 (F) accessible higher education for working
6 students through offering of college courses at
7 accessible time and locations, with particular
8 attention to rural areas;

9 (G) support to students who are dual lan-
10 guage learners, or come from low-income or mi-
11 nority communities;

12 (H) training and expertise that reflects lin-
13 guistically and culturally appropriate education
14 and practices; and

15 (I) use of workforce data to assess State
16 and local workforce needs.

17 (4) A description of the financing of the State's
18 comprehensive early childhood professional develop-
19 ment system over time.

20 **SEC. 6. STATE USE OF FUNDS.**

21 A State that receives a grant under this Act shall
22 ensure that grant funds are used to carry out the fol-
23 lowing:

24 (1) To provide scholarships to cover the costs of
25 tuition, fees, materials, transportation, paid sub-

stitutes, and release time for early childhood educators employed in an early childhood education program to pursue a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a closely related field.

(2) To support early childhood educators employed in an early childhood education program, and who have obtained a bachelor's degree in a field other than early childhood education or a closely related field, to attain a credential, licensure, or endorsement that demonstrates competence in early childhood education.

(3) To increase compensation for early childhood educators who are enrolled and making progress toward a degree in early childhood education and to provide parity of compensation upon completion of such degree and retention in the early childhood education program.

(4) To provide ongoing professional development opportunities to early childhood educators and teacher assistants employed in an early childhood education program that address—

(A) all areas of child development and learning (cognitive, social, emotional, and physical);

(B) teacher-child interaction;

1 (C) family engagement; and

2 (D) cultural competence for working with
3 a diversity of children (including children with
4 special needs and dual language learners) and
5 families.

6 **SEC. 7. SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.**

7 Grant funds provided under this Act shall supple-
8 ment, and not supplant, other Federal, State, and local
9 funds that are available for early childhood educator prep-
10 aration and professional development.

11 **SEC. 8. MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.**

12 A State that receives funds under this Act for a fiscal
13 year shall maintain the fiscal effort provided by the State
14 for the activities supported by the funds under this Act
15 at a level equal to or greater than the level of such fiscal
16 effort for the preceding fiscal year.

17 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
19 this Act such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years
20 2027 through 2032.

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