

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3534

To establish the Mental Health in Schools Excellence Program to increase the recruitment and retention of school-based mental health services providers, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2025

Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself and Mr. GOLDEN of Maine) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To establish the Mental Health in Schools Excellence Program to increase the recruitment and retention of school-based mental health services providers, 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 “Mental Health in
5 Schools Excellence Program Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROGRAM TO ESTABLISH PUBLIC-PRIVATE CON-**
2 **TRIBUTIONS TO INCREASE THE AVAILABLE**
3 **WORKFORCE OF SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL**
4 **HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS.**

5 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary shall
6 carry out a program under which eligible graduate institu-
7 tions may enter into an agreement with the Secretary to
8 cover a portion of the cost of attendance of a participating
9 student, which contributions shall be matched by equiva-
10 lent contributions towards such cost of attendance by the
11 Secretary.

12 (b) DESIGNATION OF PROGRAM.—The program
13 under this section shall be known as the “Mental Health
14 in Schools Excellence Program”.

15 (c) AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary shall enter into an
16 agreement with each eligible graduate institution seeking
17 to participate in the program under this section. Each
18 agreement shall specify the following:

19 (1) The manner (whether by direct grant, schol-
20 arship, or otherwise) in which the eligible graduate
21 institution will contribute to the cost of attendance
22 of a participating student.

23 (2) The maximum amount of the contribution
24 to be made by the eligible graduate institution with
25 respect to any particular participating student in
26 any given academic year.

1 (3) The maximum number of individuals for
2 whom the eligible graduate institution will make con-
3 tributions in any given academic year.

4 (4) That the eligible graduate institution, in se-
5 lecting participating students to receive assistance
6 under the program, shall prioritize the participating
7 students described in subsection (d)(2).

8 (5) Such other matters as the Secretary and
9 the eligible graduate institution determine appro-
10 priate.

11 (d) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall—

12 (1) make publicly available and periodically up-
13 date on the internet website of the Department of
14 Education a list of the eligible graduate institutions
15 participating in the program under this section that
16 shall specify, for each such graduate institution, ap-
17 propriate information on the agreement between the
18 Secretary and such college or university under sub-
19 section (c); and

20 (2) conduct outreach about the program under
21 this section to participating students who, as under-
22 graduates—

23 (A) received a Federal Pell Grant under
24 section 401 of the Higher Education Act of
25 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a); or

1 (B) attended an institution listed in section
2 371(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
3 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a)).

4 (e) MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS.—The Secretary may
5 provide a contribution of up to 50 percent of the cost of
6 attendance of a participating student if the eligible grad-
7 uate institution at which such student is enrolled enters
8 into an agreement under subsection (c) with the Secretary
9 to match such contribution.

10 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

11 In this Act:

12 (1) COST OF ATTENDANCE.—The term “cost of
13 attendance” has the meaning given the term in sec-
14 tion 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
15 U.S.C. 1087ll).

16 (2) ELIGIBLE GRADUATE INSTITUTION.—The
17 term “eligible graduate institution” means an insti-
18 tution of higher education in that offers a program
19 of study that leads to a graduate degree—

20 (A) in school psychology that is accredited
21 or approved by the National Association of
22 School Psychologists’ Program Accreditation
23 Board or the Commission on Accreditation of
24 the American Psychological Association and
25 that prepares students in such program for the

1 State licensing or certification examination in
2 school psychology at the specialist level;

3 (B) in an accredited school counseling pro-
4 gram that prepares students in such program
5 for the State licensing or certification examina-
6 tion in school counseling;

7 (C) in school social work that is accredited
8 by the Council on Social Work Education and
9 that prepares students in such program for the
10 State licensing or certification examination in
11 school social work;

12 (D) in another school-based mental health
13 field that prepares students in such program
14 for the State licensing or certification examina-
15 tion in such field, if applicable; or

16 (E) in any combination of study described
17 in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

18 (3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
19 term “institution of higher education” has the
20 meaning given such term in section 101 of the High-
21 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001), but ex-
22 cludes any institution of higher education described
23 in section 102(a)(1)(C) of such Act.

24 (4) PARTICIPATING STUDENT.—The term “par-
25 ticipating student” means an individual who is en-

1 rolled in a graduate degree program in a school-
2 based mental health field at a participating eligible
3 graduate institution.

4 (5) SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH FIELD.—
5 The term “school-based mental health field” means
6 each of the following fields:

7 (A) School counseling.

8 (B) School social work.

9 (C) School psychology.

10 (D) Any other field of study that leads to
11 employment as a school-based mental health
12 services provider, as determined by the Sec-
13 retary.

14 (6) SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
15 PROVIDER.—The term “school-based mental health
16 services provider” has the meaning given the term in
17 section 4102 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
18 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7112).

19 (7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
20 the Secretary of Education.

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