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119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4054

[Report No. 119–414]

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reform accreditation.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 20, 2025

Mr. FINE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on Education and Workforce

DECEMBER 18, 2025

Additional sponsor: Mr. MESSMER

DECEMBER 18, 2025

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole
House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on June 20, 2025]

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reform
accreditation.

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 “Accreditation Choice*
 5 *and Innovation Act”.*

6 **SEC. 2. ACCREDITING AGENCY RECOGNITION.**

7 (a) *CRITERIA REQUIRED.*—Section 496(a) of the
 8 *Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b(a)) is*
 9 *amended—*

10 (1) *in the matter preceding paragraph (1), in*
 11 *the first sentence, by striking “or training” and in-*
 12 *serting “or skills development”;*

13 (2) *by amending paragraph (1) to read as fol-*
 14 *lows:*

15 “(1) *the accrediting agency or association (other*
 16 *than an accrediting agency or association described*
 17 *in paragraph (2)(D)) shall be a State or national*
 18 *agency or association and shall demonstrate the abil-*
 19 *ity to operate as an institutional or programmatic*
 20 *accrediting agency or association within the State or*
 21 *nationally, as appropriate;”;*

22 (3) *in paragraph (2)—*

23 (A) *in subparagraph (A)—*

24 (i) *in clause (i), by striking “prin-*
 25 *cipal”; and*

1 (ii) in clause (ii), by striking “its
2 principal” and inserting “a”; and

3 (B) in subparagraph (B), by striking “or”
4 at the end;

5 (C) in subparagraph (C)—

6 (i) by striking “its principal” and in-
7 serting “a”; and

8 (ii) by inserting “or” at the end; and
9 (D) by adding at the end the following:

10 “(D) is an entity (such as an industry-spe-
11 cific quality assurance entity) that has been—

12 “(i) determined by a State to be a reli-
13 able authority as to the quality of education
14 or skills development offered in such State
15 for the purposes of this Act; and

16 “(ii) designated (in accordance with
17 subsection (b)(1)) by such State as an ac-
18 crediting agency or association with respect
19 to such State for such purposes;”;

20 (4) in paragraph (3)—

21 (A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read
22 as follows:

23 “(A) subparagraph (A), (C), or (D) of para-
24 graph (2), then such agency or association is—

1 “(i) distinctly incorporated or orga-
2 nized; and

3 “(ii) both administratively and finan-
4 cially separate from, and independent of,
5 any related, associated, or affiliated trade
6 association or membership organization, by
7 ensuring that—

8 “(I) the members of the board or
9 governing body of the accrediting agen-
10 cy or association are not elected or se-
11 lected by the board or chief executive
12 officer (or the representative of such
13 board or officer) of any related, associ-
14 ated, or affiliated trade association or
15 membership organization;

16 “(II) among the membership of
17 the board or governing body of the ac-
18 crediting agency or association—

19 “(aa) if such board or body
20 is comprised of 5 or fewer mem-
21 bers, there is a minimum of one
22 member who is not also a member
23 of any related, associated, or af-
24 filiated trade association or mem-
25 bership organization (referred to

1 *in this subclause as a ‘public*
2 *member’)* and who represents
3 *business (such as an owner of a*
4 *business (including a small busi-*
5 *ness), a chief executive or oper-*
6 *ating officer of a business, or an-*
7 *other other business executive or*
8 *employer with optimum policy-*
9 *making or hiring authority); and*
10 *“(bb) if such board or body is*
11 *comprised of 6 or more members,*
12 *there is a minimum of 2 public*
13 *members (at least one of whom*
14 *represents business (as described*
15 *in item (aa))) for every 6 mem-*
16 *bers;*
17 *“(III) guidelines are established*
18 *for such members to avoid conflicts of*
19 *interest, including specific guidelines*
20 *to ensure that no such member is an*
21 *employee of any institution accredited*
22 *by the agency or association or has a*
23 *financial interest in any such institu-*
24 *tion;*

1 “(IV) dues to the accrediting
2 agency or association are paid sepa-
3 rately from any dues paid to any re-
4 lated, associated, or affiliated trade as-
5 sociation or membership organization;
6 and

7 “(V) the budget of the accrediting
8 agency or association is developed, de-
9 termined, and maintained by the ac-
10 crediting agency or association without
11 any review by, consultation with, or
12 approval by any related, associated, or
13 affiliated trade association or member-
14 ship organization; or”;

15 (B) by striking “or” at the end of subpara-
16 graph (B); and

17 (C) by striking subparagraph (C);

18 (5) in paragraph (4)—

19 (A) in subparagraph (A)—

20 (i) by inserting “(in the manner de-
21 scribed in subparagraph (B))” after “reli-
22 gious missions”; and

23 (ii) by striking “and” at the end; and

24 (B) by striking subparagraph (B) and in-
25 serting the following:

1 “(B) such accrediting agency or association con-
2 sistently applies and enforces standards that respect
3 the stated religious mission of an institution of higher
4 education by—

5 “(i) basing decisions regarding accredita-
6 tion and preaccreditation on the standards of ac-
7 creditation of such agency or association; and

8 “(ii) not using as a negative factor the in-
9 stitution’s religious mission based policies, deci-
10 sions, and practices in the areas covered by sub-
11 paragraphs (B), (C), (D), (E), and (F) of para-
12 graph (5), except that the agency or association
13 may require that the institution’s or a program
14 of study’s curricula include all core components
15 required by the agency or association that are
16 not inconsistent with the institution’s religious
17 mission; and

18 “(C) such agency or association demonstrates the
19 ability to review, evaluate, and assess the quality of
20 any instruction delivery model or method such agency
21 or association has or seeks to include within its scope
22 of recognition, without giving preference to or dif-
23 ferentially treating (such as through separate stand-
24 ards, procedures, or policies) a particular instruction
25 delivery model or method offered by an institution or

1 *program, except that in a case in which an instruc-*
2 *tion delivery model allows for the separation of the*
3 *student from the instructor, the agency or association*
4 *requires the institution to have processes—*

5 *“(i) through which the institution estab-*
6 *lishes that the student who registers in a course*
7 *or program with such an instruction delivery*
8 *model is the same student who participates in*
9 *the course or program of study (including, to the*
10 *extent practicable, the testing or other assess-*
11 *ments required under the course or program of*
12 *study), completes the course or program of study,*
13 *and receives the academic credit for such course*
14 *or program of study; and*

15 *“(ii) which are implemented in a manner*
16 *that is minimally burdensome to the student;”;*
17 *(6) in paragraph (5)—*

18 *(A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read*
19 *as follows:*

20 *“(A) success with respect to student achieve-*
21 *ment outcomes in relation to the institution’s*
22 *mission and to the programs the institution of-*
23 *fers, or the mission of a specific degree, certifi-*
24 *cate, or credential program, which may include*

1 *different standards for different institutions or*
2 *programs of study, and which shall include—*

3 *“(i) standards for consideration of stu-*
4 *dent success outcomes measures, includ-*
5 *ing—*

6 *“(I) a comparison of the median*
7 *total price charged to students in a*
8 *program of study student cohort to the*
9 *value-added earnings of such cohort;*

10 *“(II) completion rates;*

11 *“(III) retention rates; and*

12 *“(IV) loan repayment rates;*

13 *“(ii) standards for consideration of*
14 *learning outcomes measures (such as com-*
15 *petency attainment and licensing examina-*
16 *tion passage rates); and*

17 *“(iii) standards for consideration of*
18 *labor market outcomes measures (such as*
19 *employability measures, earnings gains, or*
20 *other similar approaches);”; and*

21 *(B) by amending subparagraph (I) to read*
22 *as follows:*

23 *“(I) record of student complaints received*
24 *by, or available to, the agency or association,*

1 *and the institution’s process for resolving com-*
 2 *plaints against the institution; and”;*

3 *(C) in the matter following subparagraph*
 4 *(J), by striking “subparagraphs (A), (H), and*
 5 *(J)” and inserting “subparagraph (J)”;* and

6 *(7) in paragraph (6)(A)(ii), by inserting before*
 7 *the semicolon at the end the following: “(including*
 8 *any student complaints received by, or available to,*
 9 *the agency or association)”.*

10 *(b) SECRETARIAL REQUIREMENTS AND AUTHORITY.—*
 11 *Subsection (b) of section 496 of the Higher Education Act*
 12 *of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) is amended to read as follows:*

13 *“(b) SECRETARIAL REQUIREMENTS AND AUTHOR-*
 14 *ITY.—*

15 *“(1) STATE DESIGNATED ACCREDITING AGEN-*
 16 *CY.—*

17 *“(A) APPROVAL OF STATE PLANS.—The*
 18 *Secretary shall—*

19 *“(i) if a State’s plan with respect to*
 20 *the State’s designation of an entity as an*
 21 *accrediting agency or association for the*
 22 *purposes described in subsection (a)(2)(D)*
 23 *includes each of the elements listed in sub-*
 24 *paragraph (B)—*

1 “(I) subject to clause (ii)(I), ap-
2 prove the State’s designation of such
3 entity as such accrediting agency or
4 association for the purposes described
5 in subsection (a)(2)(D) for a 5-year pe-
6 riod, beginning not later than 30 days
7 after receipt of the plan from such
8 State with respect to such designation;

9 “(II) submit to the State and the
10 authorizing committees, and make pub-
11 licly available, the Secretary’s response
12 to the State with respect to such plan,
13 including whether the plan includes
14 each of the elements listed in subpara-
15 graph (B); and

16 “(III) publish in the Federal Reg-
17 ister, with a 30-day public comment
18 period, the plan submitted by such
19 State with respect to such designation,
20 and the Secretary’s response to such
21 plan; and

22 “(ii) if, not later than 30 days after
23 the 30-day public comment period referred
24 to in clause (i)(III), a State revises the
25 State’s plan approved under clause (i)(I) to

1 *incorporate one or more of the comments re-*
2 *ceived during such 30-day comment period,*
3 *and such revised plan includes each of the*
4 *elements listed in subparagraph (B)—*

5 *“(I) revise the 5-year period de-*
6 *scribed in clause (i)(I) approving the*
7 *State’s designation of the entity as an*
8 *accrediting agency or association for*
9 *the purposes described in subsection*
10 *(a)(2)(D) to begin not later than 30*
11 *days after receipt of such revised plan;*

12 *“(II) submit to the State and the*
13 *authorizing committees, and make pub-*
14 *licly available, the Secretary’s response*
15 *to the State with respect to such re-*
16 *vised plan, including whether such re-*
17 *vised plan includes each of the elements*
18 *listed in subparagraph (B); and*

19 *“(III) publish in the Federal Reg-*
20 *ister, such revised State plan, and the*
21 *Secretary’s response to such revised*
22 *State plan.*

23 *“(B) REQUIRED PLAN ELEMENTS.—The re-*
24 *quired elements of a State plan submitted under*
25 *subparagraph (A) with respect to the designation*

1 *of an entity as an accrediting agency or associa-*
2 *tion are as follows:*

3 “(i) *A description of the process the*
4 *State used to select the entity for such des-*
5 *ignation.*

6 “(ii) *A justification of the State’s deci-*
7 *sion to select the entity for such designation.*

8 “(iii) *A description of any require-*
9 *ments (in addition to the requirements of*
10 *this section), that the State required the en-*
11 *tity to comply with as a condition of receiv-*
12 *ing and maintaining such designation, in-*
13 *cluding a requirement for the entity to use,*
14 *to the extent practicable during such des-*
15 *ignation, the common terminology developed*
16 *pursuant to paragraph (3).*

17 “(iv) *A copy of the standards, policies,*
18 *and procedures of the entity that the State*
19 *considered in selecting the entity for such*
20 *designation.*

21 “(v) *The State’s assessment of how the*
22 *standards for accreditation of the entity*
23 *will be effective in meeting the requirements*
24 *of subsection (a)(5).*

1 “(vi) *Evidence that at least one other*
2 *State has determined that such entity is a*
3 *reliable authority as to the quality of edu-*
4 *cation offered for the purposes of this Act.*

5 “(vii) *An assurance that the State will*
6 *comply with the monitoring requirements*
7 *described in subparagraph (C).*

8 “(C) *STATE MONITORING.—*

9 “(i) *IN GENERAL.—A State that has*
10 *designated an entity as an accrediting*
11 *agency or association for the purposes de-*
12 *scribed in subsection (a)(2)(D) shall submit*
13 *to the Secretary, and to the State author-*
14 *izing entity, as appropriate, a report at the*
15 *end of the 5-year period for which the entity*
16 *has received such designation, which shall*
17 *include, with respect to each program of*
18 *study or institution that has been accredited*
19 *by such entity during such period, and*
20 *disaggregated by type of credential, certifi-*
21 *cation, or degree—*

22 “(I) *the number and percentage of*
23 *students who have successfully obtained*
24 *a postsecondary education credential,*

1 *certification, or degree offered by such*
2 *program or institution;*

3 “(II) *the number and percentage*
4 *of students who were enrolled and did*
5 *not successfully obtain such a creden-*
6 *tial, certification, or degree within 150*
7 *percent of the program length; and*

8 “(III) *the results of the State’s as-*
9 *essment described in subparagraph*
10 *(B)(v).*

11 “(ii) *COUNTING TRANSFER STU-*
12 *DENTS.—For purposes of clause (i)(I), a*
13 *student shall be counted as obtaining a cre-*
14 *dential, certification, or degree offered by a*
15 *program of study or institution that was*
16 *accredited by the entity during the period*
17 *for which the report under this subpara-*
18 *graph is being submitted, if the student ob-*
19 *tains such credential, certification, or degree*
20 *after transferring to another institution*
21 *during such period.*

22 “(2) *AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE AN ACCELERATED*
23 *PATH TO RECOGNITION.—With respect to a prospec-*
24 *tive accrediting agency or association that submits to*
25 *the Secretary an application for initial recognition*

1 *under this Act, the Secretary may provide such rec-*
 2 *ognition to such agency or association within 2 years*
 3 *after receipt of such application, if such applica-*
 4 *tion—*

5 *“(A) demonstrates that the agency or asso-*
 6 *ciation—*

7 *“(i) has at least one year of experience*
 8 *in making accreditation or preaccreditation*
 9 *decisions; and*

10 *“(ii) has policies in place that meet all*
 11 *the criteria under subsection (a) for recogni-*
 12 *tion covering the range of the specific de-*
 13 *grees, certificates, institutions, and pro-*
 14 *grams of study for which the agency or as-*
 15 *sociation seeks such recognition; and*

16 *“(B) provides an assurance that if the agen-*
 17 *cy or association receives such recognition, the*
 18 *agency or association will submit to the Sec-*
 19 *retary monitoring reports regarding accredita-*
 20 *tion or preaccreditation decisions, as appro-*
 21 *priate.*

22 *“(3) DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON TERMI-*
 23 *NOLOGY.—*

24 *“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18*
 25 *months after the date of enactment of the Accred-*

1 *itation Choice and Innovation Act, the Secretary*
2 *shall—*

3 “(i) *convene a panel of experts to de-*
4 *velop common terminology for accrediting*
5 *agencies or associations to use in making*
6 *accrediting decisions with respect to pro-*
7 *grams of study and institutions, such as a*
8 *common understanding of monitoring,*
9 *warning, show cause, and other relevant*
10 *statuses, as appropriate;*

11 “(ii) *publish in the Federal Register*
12 *with a 60-day public comment period, the*
13 *recommendations for such common termi-*
14 *nology; and*

15 “(iii) *if the panel revises any rec-*
16 *ommendations published pursuant to clause*
17 *(ii) based on the comments received during*
18 *the 60-day public comment period, publish*
19 *such revised recommendations in the Fed-*
20 *eral Register not later than 60 days after*
21 *such 60-day comment period.*

22 “(B) *FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE*
23 *ACT.—Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code,*
24 *shall not apply to the panel convened under this*
25 *paragraph.*

1 “(C) *TERMINATION.*—*The panel convened*
 2 *under this paragraph shall terminate on the date*
 3 *that is 60 days after the 60-day public comment*
 4 *period referred to in subparagraph (A)(ii).”.*

5 (c) *OPERATING PROCEDURES REQUIRED.*—

6 (1) *ON-SITE INSPECTIONS AND REVIEWS.*—*Para-*
 7 *graph (1) of section 496(c) of the Higher Education*
 8 *Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b(c)) is amended—*

9 (A) *by inserting “(which may vary based*
 10 *on institutional risk consistent with policies pro-*
 11 *mulgated by the agency or association to deter-*
 12 *mine such risk and interval frequency as author-*
 13 *ized under subsection (p))” after “intervals”;*
 14 *and*

15 (B) *by striking “, including those regarding*
 16 *distance education”.*

17 (2) *MECHANISM TO IDENTIFY INSTITUTIONS AND*
 18 *PROGRAMS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES.*—*Section*
 19 *496(c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20*
 20 *U.S.C. 1099b(c)) is further amended—*

21 (A) *by redesignating paragraphs (2)*
 22 *through (9) as paragraphs (3) through (10), re-*
 23 *spectively; and*

24 (B) *by inserting after paragraph (1) the fol-*
 25 *lowing:*

1 “(2) develops a policy process to identify any in-
 2 stitution or program of study accredited by the agen-
 3 cy or association that is not meeting the standards for
 4 accreditation of the agency or association, with a
 5 focus on the standards assessing an institution’s or
 6 program of study’s student success outcomes described
 7 in subsection (a)(5)(A)(i), which shall include—

8 “(A) not less than annually, evaluating the
 9 extent to which such an identified institution or
 10 program of study continues to be in compliance
 11 with such standards or other indicators; and

12 “(B) as appropriate, requiring the institu-
 13 tion or program of study to submit a plan, on
 14 an annual basis, to the accrediting agency or as-
 15 sociation to—

16 “(i) address and remedy performance
 17 issues with respect to such compliance; and

18 “(ii) ensure that such plan is success-
 19 fully implemented;”.

20 (3) PROCEDURES WITH RESPECT TO SUB-
 21 STANTIVE CHANGES.—Paragraph (5) of section 496(c)
 22 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
 23 1099b(c)) (as redesignated by paragraph (2)(A)) is
 24 amended to read as follows:

1 “(5) establishes and applies or maintains poli-
2 cies to ensure that any substantive change of an insti-
3 tution described in subparagraph (B) after the agency
4 or association has granted the institution accredita-
5 tion or preaccreditation status does not adversely af-
6 fect the capacity of the institution to continue to meet
7 the agency’s or association’s standards for such ac-
8 creditation or preaccreditation status, which shall in-
9 clude policies that—

10 “(A) require the institution to obtain the
11 agency’s or association’s approval of the sub-
12 stantive change before the agency or association
13 includes the change in the scope of the institu-
14 tion’s accreditation or preaccreditation status;
15 and

16 “(B) define substantive change to include—

17 “(i) any change in the established mis-
18 sion or objectives of the institution;

19 “(ii) any change in the legal status,
20 form of control, or ownership of the institu-
21 tion, including the acquisition or addition
22 of any other institution or new location
23 where more than 50 percent of a program
24 of study is offered;

1 “(iii) changing the credential level of-
 2 ferred by a program of study that was pre-
 3 viously accredited by the agency or associa-
 4 tion when the program of study offered a
 5 different credential level; and

6 “(iv) the entering into a contract
 7 under which another institution or an orga-
 8 nization not eligible to participate in pro-
 9 grams under this title offers more than 25
 10 percent but less than 50 percent of the in-
 11 struction of a program of study of the insti-
 12 tution with such accreditation or
 13 preaccreditation status;”.

14 (4) *PUBLIC AVAILABILITY*.—Section 496(c) of the
 15 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b(c))
 16 is further amended—

17 (A) in paragraph (8) (as redesignated by
 18 paragraph (2)(A))—

19 (i) in the matter preceding subpara-
 20 graph (A), by inserting “, on the agency’s
 21 or association’s website,” after “public”;
 22 and

23 (ii) in subparagraph (C), by inserting
 24 before the semicolon at the end the fol-
 25 lowing: “, and a summary of why such ac-

1 *tion was taken or such placement was*
 2 *made”;*

3 *(B) in paragraph (9) (as so redesignated),*
 4 *by striking “and” at the end;*

5 *(C) in paragraph (10)(B) (as so redesign-*
 6 *ated), by striking the period at the end and in-*
 7 *serting the following: “, including an assurance*
 8 *that the institution does not deny a transfer of*
 9 *credit based solely on the accreditation of the in-*
 10 *stitution at which the credit was earned;”;* and

11 *(D) by adding at the end the following:*

12 *“(11) such agency or association shall make pub-*
 13 *licly available, on the agency or association’s website,*
 14 *a list of the institutions of higher education or pro-*
 15 *gram of study accredited by such agency or associa-*
 16 *tion, which includes, with respect to each such insti-*
 17 *tution or program of study—*

18 *“(A) the year accreditation was first grant-*
 19 *ed;*

20 *“(B) the most recent date that accreditation*
 21 *or reaccreditation was granted; and*

22 *“(C) the anticipated date of the institution’s*
 23 *next evaluation for reaccreditation;”.*

24 *(5) PROHIBITION ON ASSESSMENT OF ELECTED*
 25 *OR APPOINTED OFFICIALS.—Section 496(c) of the*

1 *Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b(c))*
2 *is further amended by adding at the end the fol-*
3 *lowing:*

4 *“(12) confirms that the standards for accredita-*
5 *tion of the agency or association do not assess the*
6 *roles (including actions or statements) of elected and*
7 *appointed State and Federal officials and legislative*
8 *bodies; and”.*

9 (6) *PROHIBITION OF PRACTICES THAT RESULT*
10 *IN CREDENTIAL INFLATION.*—Section 496(c) of the
11 *Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b(c))*
12 *is further amended by adding at the end the fol-*
13 *lowing:*

14 *“(13) confirms that an institution’s or program*
15 *of study’s compliance with a standard for accredita-*
16 *tion of the agency or association does not require the*
17 *institution or program to take any action (such as*
18 *developing a new program of study) that would result*
19 *in a violation of any other such standard (including*
20 *the standards for consideration of student success out-*
21 *comes described in subsection (a)(5)(A)(i) that relate*
22 *to comparing the median total price charged to stu-*
23 *dents in a program of study student cohort to the*
24 *value-added earnings of such cohort).”.*

1 (d) *LIMITATION ON SCOPE OF CRITERIA.*—Section 496
 2 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) is
 3 further amended by amending subsection (g) to read as fol-
 4 lows:

5 “(g) *LIMITATION ON SCOPE OF CRITERIA.*—

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

9 “(2) *INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY.*—An institu-
 10 tion that is in compliance with the standards of its
 11 accrediting agency or association that assess the insti-
 12 tution in accordance with subsection (a)(5) shall meet
 13 the accreditation requirements for certification as an
 14 institution of higher education under section 102 and
 15 subpart 3 of this part, regardless of any additional
 16 standards adopted by the agency or association for
 17 purposes unrelated to participation in programs
 18 under this Act.”.

19 (e) *CHANGE OF ACCREDITING AGENCY.*—Section 496
 20 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) is
 21 further amended by amending subsection (h) to read as fol-
 22 lows:

23 “(h) *CHANGE OF ACCREDITING AGENCY OR ASSOCIA-*
 24 *TION.*—

1 “(1) *IN GENERAL.*—With respect to an institu-
2 tion or program of study that is not subject to a cov-
3 ered action and that seeks to change its accrediting
4 agency or association for a reason not related to any
5 such covered action (such as compliance with State
6 law)—

7 “(A) the Secretary shall recognize the ac-
8 creditation of such institution or program of
9 study while the institution or program is in the
10 process of changing its accrediting agency or as-
11 sociation as long as, not later than 10 days be-
12 fore the start of such process, the institution or
13 program of study provides written notification to
14 the Secretary of such process; and

15 “(B) such institution or program may make
16 such a change without the approval of the Sec-
17 retary as long as, not later than 10 days after
18 the accreditation decision by the new accrediting
19 agency or association, the institution or program
20 and such new accrediting agency or association,
21 provide written notification to the Secretary of
22 the effective date of the accreditation by such
23 agency or association of such institution or pro-
24 gram.

1 “(2) *COVERED ACTION DEFINED.*—For purposes
2 of this subsection, the term ‘covered action’ means one
3 or more of the following, when used with respect to an
4 institution or program of study:

5 “(A) A pending or final action brought by
6 a State agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or
7 terminate the institution’s legal authority to pro-
8 vide postsecondary education in the State.

9 “(B) A decision by a recognized accrediting
10 agency or association to deny accreditation or
11 preaccreditation to the institution or program of
12 study.

13 “(C) A pending or final action brought by
14 a recognized accrediting agency or association to
15 suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the ac-
16 creditation or preaccreditation of the institution
17 or program of study.

18 “(D) Probation or an equivalent status im-
19 posed on the institution or program of study by
20 a recognized accrediting agency or association.

21 “(E) The institution is in the process of a
22 substantive change (as described in subsection
23 (c)(5)).”.

1 (f) *DUAL ACCREDITATION RULE.*—Section 496 of the
 2 *Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b)* is further
 3 amended by amending subsection (i) to read as follows:

4 “(i) *DUAL ACCREDITATION RULE.*—

5 “(1) *RECOGNITION BY SECRETARY.*—The Sec-
 6 retary shall recognize the accreditation of any other-
 7 wise eligible institution of higher education if the in-
 8 stitution of higher education is accredited, as an in-
 9 stitution, by more than one accrediting agency or as-
 10 sociation.

11 “(2) *DESIGNATION BY INSTITUTION.*—If the in-
 12 stitution is accredited, as an institution, by more
 13 than one accrediting agency or association, the insti-
 14 tution—

15 “(A) shall—

16 “(i) designate which agency’s or asso-
 17 ciation’s accreditation shall be utilized in
 18 determining the institution’s eligibility for
 19 participation in programs under this Act;
 20 and

21 “(ii) the period such agency’s or asso-
 22 ciation’s accreditation shall be so utilized;
 23 and

24 “(B) after the period described in subpara-
 25 graph (A)(ii), the institution may designate a

1 *different agency’s or association’s accreditation*
 2 *to be utilized in accordance with subparagraph*
 3 *(A)(i).”.*

4 *(g) RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS RULE.—Section 496 of*
 5 *the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) is fur-*
 6 *ther amended by amending subsection (k) to read as follows:*

7 *“(k) RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION RULE.—*

8 *“(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection*
 9 *(j), the Secretary shall allow an institution that has*
 10 *had its accreditation withdrawn, revoked, or other-*
 11 *wise terminated, or has voluntarily withdrawn from*
 12 *an accreditation agency, to remain certified as an in-*
 13 *stitution of higher education under section 102 and*
 14 *subpart 3 of this part for a period sufficient to allow*
 15 *such institution to obtain alternative accreditation, if*
 16 *the Secretary determines, in accordance with para-*
 17 *graph (2), that such withdrawal, revocation, or termi-*
 18 *nation—*

19 *“(A) is related to the religious mission or*
 20 *affiliation of the institution; and*

21 *“(B) is not related to the accreditation cri-*
 22 *teria provided for in this section.*

23 *“(2) ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT FOR FAILURE*
 24 *TO RESPECT RELIGIOUS MISSION.—*

25 *“(A) IN GENERAL.—*

1 “(i) *INSTITUTION.*—*If an institution of*
2 *higher education believes that an adverse*
3 *action of an accrediting agency or associa-*
4 *tion fails to respect the institution’s reli-*
5 *gious mission in violation of subsection*
6 *(a)(4)(B), the institution—*

7 “(I) *may file a complaint with*
8 *the Secretary to review the adverse ac-*
9 *tion of the agency or association; and*

10 “(II) *prior to filing such com-*
11 *plaint, shall notify the Secretary and*
12 *the agency or association of an intent*
13 *to file such complaint not later than 30*
14 *days after—*

15 “(aa) *receiving the adverse*
16 *action from the agency or associa-*
17 *tion; or*

18 “(bb) *determining that dis-*
19 *cussions with or the processes of*
20 *the agency or association to rem-*
21 *edy the failure to respect the reli-*
22 *gious mission of the institution*
23 *will fail to result in the with-*
24 *drawal of the adverse action by*
25 *the agency or association.*

1 “(ii) *ACCREDITING AGENCY OR ASSO-*
 2 *CIATION.*—Upon notification of an intent to
 3 *file a complaint and through the duration*
 4 *of the complaint process under this para-*
 5 *graph, the Secretary and the accrediting*
 6 *agency or association shall treat the accred-*
 7 *itation status of the institution of higher*
 8 *education as if the adverse action for which*
 9 *the institution is filing the complaint had*
 10 *not been taken.*

11 “(B) *COMPLAINT.*—Not later than 45 days
 12 *after providing notice of the intent to file a com-*
 13 *plaint, the institution shall file the complaint*
 14 *with the Secretary (and provide a copy to the*
 15 *accrediting agency or association), which shall*
 16 *include—*

17 “(i) *a description of the adverse action;*

18 “(ii) *how the adverse action fails to re-*
 19 *spect the institution’s religious mission in*
 20 *violation of subsection (a)(4)(B); and*

21 “(iii) *any other information the insti-*
 22 *tution determines relevant to the complaint.*

23 “(C) *RESPONSE.*—

24 “(i) *IN GENERAL.*—The accrediting
 25 *agency or association shall have 30 days*

1 *from the date the complaint is filed with the*
2 *Secretary to file with the Secretary (and*
3 *provide a copy to the institution) a response*
4 *to the complaint, which response shall in-*
5 *clude—*

6 *“(I) how the adverse action is*
7 *based on a violation of the agency or*
8 *association’s standards for accredita-*
9 *tion; and*

10 *“(II) how the adverse action does*
11 *not fail to respect the religious mission*
12 *of the institution and is in compliance*
13 *with subsection (a)(4)(B).*

14 *“(ii) BURDEN OF PROOF.—*

15 *“(I) IN GENERAL.—The accred-*
16 *iting agency or association shall bear*
17 *the burden of proving that the agency*
18 *or association has not taken the ad-*
19 *verse action as a result of the institu-*
20 *tion’s religious mission, and that the*
21 *action does not fail to respect the insti-*
22 *tution’s religious mission in violation*
23 *of subsection (a)(4)(B), by showing*
24 *that the adverse action does not impact*

1 *the aspect of the religious mission*
 2 *claimed to be affected in the complaint.*

3 “(II) *INSUFFICIENT PROOF.*—*Any*
 4 *evidence that the adverse action results*
 5 *from the application of a neutral and*
 6 *generally applicable rule shall be insuf-*
 7 *ficient to prove that the action does not*
 8 *fail to respect an institution’s religious*
 9 *mission.*

10 “(D) *ADDITIONAL INSTITUTION RE-*
 11 *SPONSE.*—

12 “(i) *IN GENERAL.*—*The institution*
 13 *shall have a 30-day period beginning on the*
 14 *date on which the agency or association’s*
 15 *response is filed with the Secretary to file*
 16 *with the Secretary (and provide a copy to*
 17 *the agency or association) a response to any*
 18 *issues raised in the response of the agency*
 19 *or association.*

20 “(ii) *WAIVER OF RIGHT TO RE-*
 21 *SPOND.*—*An institution that does not file*
 22 *such a response during the 30-day period*
 23 *described in clause (i) shall be deemed to*
 24 *have waived the institution’s right to re-*

1 *spond to the response of the agency or asso-*
2 *ciation.*

3 *“(E) SECRETARIAL ACTION.—*

4 *“(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30*
5 *days after the institution submits a re-*
6 *sponse pursuant to subparagraph (D)(i), or,*
7 *in the case of an institution that waives the*
8 *institution’s right to respond in accordance*
9 *to subparagraph (D)(ii), 30 days after the*
10 *date on which the agency or association’s*
11 *response is filed with the Secretary—*

12 *“(I) the Secretary shall review the*
13 *materials to determine if the accred-*
14 *iting agency or association has met its*
15 *burden of proof under subparagraph*
16 *(C)(ii)(I); or*

17 *“(II) in a case in which the Sec-*
18 *retary fails to conduct such review—*

19 *“(aa) the Secretary shall be*
20 *deemed as determining that the*
21 *adverse action fails to respect the*
22 *religious mission of the institu-*
23 *tion; and*

24 *“(bb) the accrediting agency*
25 *or association shall be required to*

1 *reverse the action immediately*
2 *and take no further action with*
3 *respect to such adverse action.*

4 “(ii) *REVIEW OF COMPLAINT.—In re-*
5 *viewing the complaint under clause (i)(I)—*

6 “(I) *the Secretary shall consider*
7 *the institution to be correct in the as-*
8 *sertion that the adverse action fails to*
9 *respect the institution’s religious mis-*
10 *sion and shall apply the burden of*
11 *proof described in subparagraph*
12 *(C)(ii)(I) with respect to the accred-*
13 *iting agency or association; and*

14 “(II) *if the Secretary determines*
15 *that the accrediting agency or associa-*
16 *tion fails to meet such burden of*
17 *proof—*

18 “(aa) *the Secretary shall no-*
19 *tify the institution and the agency*
20 *or association that the agency or*
21 *association is not in compliance*
22 *with subsection (a)(4)(B), and*
23 *that such agency or association*
24 *shall carry out the requirements of*

1 item (bb) to be in compliance
2 with subsection (a)(4)(B); and

3 “(bb) the agency or associa-
4 tion shall reverse the adverse ac-
5 tion immediately and take no fur-
6 ther action with respect to such
7 adverse action.

8 “(iii) *FINAL DEPARTMENTAL AC-*
9 *TION.—The Secretary’s determination under*
10 *this subparagraph shall be the final action*
11 *of the Department on the complaint.*

12 “(F) *RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in*
13 *this paragraph shall prohibit—*

14 “(i) *an accrediting agency or associa-*
15 *tion from taking an adverse action against*
16 *an institution of higher education for a fail-*
17 *ure to comply with the agency or associa-*
18 *tion’s standards of accreditation as long as*
19 *such standards are in compliance with sub-*
20 *section (a)(4)(B) and any other applicable*
21 *requirements of this section; or*

22 “(ii) *an institution of higher education*
23 *from exercising any other rights to address*
24 *concerns with respect to an accrediting*
25 *agency or association or the accreditation*

1 *process of an accrediting agency or associa-*
 2 *tion.*

3 “(G) *REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE.*—

4 “(i) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Secretary may*
 5 *only issue regulations and guidance under*
 6 *this paragraph that explain or clarify the*
 7 *process for providing a notice of an intent*
 8 *to file a complaint under this paragraph,*
 9 *and for preparing and filing such a com-*
 10 *plaint, a response to such complaint by an*
 11 *accrediting agency or association, and a re-*
 12 *sponse by an institution to a response filed*
 13 *by an accrediting agency or association.*

14 “(ii) *CLARIFICATION.*—*The Secretary*
 15 *may not issue regulations, guidance, or oth-*
 16 *erwise determine or suggest, when discus-*
 17 *sions to remedy the failure by an accred-*
 18 *iting agency or association to respect the re-*
 19 *ligious mission of an institution of higher*
 20 *education referred to in subparagraph*
 21 *(A)(i)(II)(bb) have failed or will fail.”.*

22 (h) *INDEPENDENT EVALUATION.*—*Section 496(n)(3) of*
 23 *the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b(n)(3))*
 24 *is amended by striking the last sentence.*

1 (i) *REGULATIONS.*—Section 496(o) of the Higher Edu-
 2 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b(o)) is amended by in-
 3 serting before the period at the end the following: “, or with
 4 respect to the policies and procedures of an accreditation
 5 agency or association described in paragraph (2) or (5) of
 6 subsection (c) or how the agency or association carries out
 7 such policies and procedures”.

8 (j) *RISK-BASED REVIEW PROCESSES OR PROCEDURES;*
 9 *WAIVER.*—Section 496 of the Higher Education Act of 1965
 10 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) is further amended—

11 (1) by striking subsections (p) and (q); and

12 (2) by adding at the end the following:

13 “(p) *RISK-BASED OR DIFFERENTIATED REVIEW PROC-*
 14 *ESSES OR PROCEDURES.*—

15 “(1) *IN GENERAL.*—Notwithstanding any other
 16 provision of law (including subsection (a)(4)(A)), an
 17 accrediting agency or association shall establish risk-
 18 based processes or procedures for assessing compliance
 19 with the accrediting agency or association’s standards
 20 (including policies related to substantive change and
 21 award of accreditation statuses) under which the
 22 agency or association—

23 “(A) creates a system for understanding the
 24 performance of each institution and program of
 25 study being reviewed by such agency or associa-

1 *tion in comparison with the performance of other*
2 *similarly situated institutions or programs of*
3 *study (which may include the past performance*
4 *of the institution or program with respect to*
5 *meeting the accrediting agency or association’s*
6 *standards, including the standards relating to*
7 *the student success outcomes described in sub-*
8 *section (a)(5)(A)(i));*

9 *“(B) with respect to each institution and*
10 *program of study designated as high-risk, as de-*
11 *termined using the accrediting agency or asso-*
12 *ciation’s system described in subparagraph (A),*
13 *requires the institution and program of study to*
14 *submit the annual plans described in subsection*
15 *(c)(2)(B) to the agency or association that ad-*
16 *dress the performance issues of such institution*
17 *or program of study that resulted in such des-*
18 *ignation;*

19 *“(C) with respect to each institution and*
20 *program of study whose performance meets or ex-*
21 *ceeds the standards of the accrediting agency or*
22 *association, as determined using the system de-*
23 *scribed in subparagraph (A), reduces any com-*
24 *pliance requirements with respect to such stand-*
25 *ards that are not assessing the institution or*

1 program of study in accordance with subsection
2 (a)(5) (such as on-site inspections); and

3 “(D) may require an institution or pro-
4 gram of study that is required to submit an an-
5 nual plan under subsection (c)(2)(B) (such as an
6 institution or program that has a high-risk des-
7 ignation described in subparagraph (B)) and
8 that has not improved as required by such an-
9 nual plan, to take actions to avoid or minimize
10 the risks that may lead to revocation of accredi-
11 tation (such as limiting certain program of
12 study enrollment or recommending to the Sec-
13 retary to limit funds under this title for such an
14 institution or program).

15 “(2) *PROHIBITION.*—Any risk-based review proc-
16 ess or procedure established pursuant to this sub-
17 section shall not discriminate against, or otherwise
18 preclude, institutions of higher education based on in-
19 stitutional sector or category, including an institution
20 of higher education’s tax status.”.

21 (k) *DEFINITIONS.*—Section 496 of the Higher Edu-
22 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) is further amended
23 by adding at the end the following:

24 “(q) *DEFINITIONS.*—For purposes of this section:

1 “(1) *PROGRAM LENGTH*.—The term ‘program
2 length’ means the minimum amount of time in weeks,
3 months, or years that is specified in the catalog, mar-
4 keting materials, or other official publications of an
5 institution of higher education for a full-time student
6 to complete the requirements for a specific program of
7 study.

8 “(2) *PROGRAM OF STUDY*.—

9 “(A) *IN GENERAL*.—The term ‘program of
10 study’ means an eligible program at an institu-
11 tion of higher education that is classified by a
12 combination of—

13 “(i) one or more *CIP* codes; and

14 “(ii) one credential level, determined
15 by the credential awarded upon completion
16 of the program.

17 “(B) *CIP CODE*.—The term ‘*CIP* code’
18 means the six-digit taxonomic identification code
19 assigned by an institution of higher education to
20 a specific program of study at the institution,
21 determined by the institution of higher education
22 in accordance with the *Classification of Instruc-*
23 *tional Programs* published by the National Cen-
24 ter for Education Statistics.

25 “(C) *CREDENTIAL LEVEL*.—

1 “(i) *IN GENERAL.*—*The term ‘ creden-*
 2 *tial level’ means the level of the degree or*
 3 *other credential awarded by an institution*
 4 *of higher education to students who com-*
 5 *plete a program of study of the institution.*
 6 *Each degree or other credential awarded by*
 7 *an institution shall be categorized by the in-*
 8 *stitution as either undergraduate credential*
 9 *level or graduate credential level.*

10 “(ii) *UNDERGRADUATE CREDENTIAL.*—
 11 *When used with respect to a credential or*
 12 *credential level, the term ‘undergraduate*
 13 *credential’ includes credentials such as an*
 14 *undergraduate certificate, an associate de-*
 15 *gree, a bachelor’s degree, and a post-bacca-*
 16 *laureate certificate (including the*
 17 *coursework specified in paragraphs (3)(B)*
 18 *and (4)(B) of section 484(b)).*

19 “(iii) *GRADUATE CREDENTIAL.*—*When*
 20 *used with respect to a credential or creden-*
 21 *tial level, the term ‘graduate credential’ in-*
 22 *cludes credentials such as a master’s degree,*
 23 *a doctoral degree, a professional degree, and*
 24 *a postgraduate certificate.*

25 “(3) *PROGRAM OF STUDY STUDENT COHORT.*—

1 “(A) *IN GENERAL.*—The term ‘program of
2 *study student cohort*’ means the cohort of indi-
3 *viduals who completed a specific program of*
4 *study at an institution of higher education dur-*
5 *ing the same award year, except that such cohort*
6 *shall only include an individual who received*
7 *Federal financial aid under this title during the*
8 *period the individual was enrolled in such pro-*
9 *gram of study.*

10 “(B) *SMALL COHORTS.*—With respect to
11 *such a program of study student cohort that has*
12 *fewer than 30 individuals, the Secretary shall*
13 *aggregate additional years of data for the pro-*
14 *gram of study in order to achieve a cohort of at*
15 *least 30 individuals.*

16 “(4) *RELIGIOUS MISSION.*—The term ‘religious
17 *mission*’—

18 “(A) *means a published institutional mis-*
19 *sion that is approved by the governing body of*
20 *an institution of higher education and that in-*
21 *cludes, refers to, or is predicated upon religious*
22 *tenets, beliefs, or teachings; and*

23 “(B) *may be reflected in any of the institu-*
24 *tion’s policies, decisions, or practices related to*
25 *such tenets, beliefs, or teachings (including any*

1 *policies or decisions concerning housing, employ-*
2 *ment, curriculum, self-governance, or student ad-*
3 *mission, continuing enrollment, or graduation).*

4 “(5) *TOTAL PRICE.*—*With respect to a student*
5 *who received Federal financial assistance under this*
6 *title and who completes a program of study, the term*
7 *‘total price’ means the total amount, before Federal fi-*
8 *nancial assistance under this title was applied, a stu-*
9 *dent was required to pay to complete the program of*
10 *study. A student’s total price shall be calculated by*
11 *the Secretary as the difference between—*

12 “(A) *the total amount of tuition and fees*
13 *that were charged to such student before the ap-*
14 *plication of any Federal financial assistance*
15 *provided under this title; minus*

16 “(B) *the total amount of grants and schol-*
17 *arships described in section 480(i) awarded to*
18 *such student from non-Federal sources for such*
19 *program of study.*

20 “(6) *VALUE-ADDED EARNINGS.*—

21 “(A) *VALUE-ADDED EARNINGS.*—

22 “(i) *IN GENERAL.*—*The term ‘value-*
23 *added earnings’ mean—*

24 “(I) *the median annual earnings*
25 *of a program of study student cohort,*

1 *as adjusted pursuant to clause (iii) (as*
 2 *appropriate), minus*

3 *“(II) the product of—*

4 *“(aa) the poverty line appli-*
 5 *cable to a single individual, (as*
 6 *determined under section 673(2)*
 7 *of the Community Services Block*
 8 *Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)))*
 9 *for the year in which such earn-*
 10 *ings were measured; and*

11 *“(bb) the applicable percent-*
 12 *age described in clause (ii).*

13 *“(ii) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—The*
 14 *applicable percentage described in this*
 15 *clause is—*

16 *“(I) in the case of a program of*
 17 *study student cohort for program of*
 18 *study that awards an undergraduate*
 19 *credential, 150 percent; and*

20 *“(II) in the case of a program of*
 21 *study student cohort for a program of*
 22 *study that awards a graduate creden-*
 23 *tial, 300 percent.*

24 *“(iii) GEOGRAPHIC ADJUSTMENT.—*
 25 *Except in the case of a program of study*

1 *student cohort in which 50 percent or more*
2 *of the individuals in such cohort partici-*
3 *pated exclusively online, the Secretary shall*
4 *adjust the median annual earnings of a*
5 *program of study student cohort by the re-*
6 *gional price parity index of the Bureau of*
7 *Economic Analysis for the metropolitan sta-*
8 *tistical area in which the institution offer-*
9 *ing such program is located.*

10 *“(B) ANNUAL EARNINGS.—*

11 *“(i) ANNUAL EARNINGS.—The term*
12 *‘annual earnings’ means the earnings of an*
13 *individual who is in a program of study*
14 *student cohort, who is working, and who is*
15 *not enrolled at an institution, measured—*

16 *“(I) in the case of an under-*
17 *graduate certificate, post-baccalaureate*
18 *certificate, or graduate certificate, 1*
19 *year after completion of such program;*

20 *“(II) in the case of an associates*
21 *or masters degree, 2 years after com-*
22 *pletion of such program; and*

23 *“(III) in the case of bachelor’s de-*
24 *gree, doctoral degree, or professional*

1 *degree, 4 years after completion of such*
2 *program.*

3 “(ii) *EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may,*
4 *as the Secretary determines appropriate*
5 *based on the characteristics of a program of*
6 *study, extend the applicable measurement*
7 *period under clause (i) for a program of*
8 *study that—*

9 “(I) *requires completion of an ad-*
10 *ditional educational program (such as*
11 *a residency or fellowship) after comple-*
12 *tion of the program of study in order*
13 *to obtain licensure or board certifi-*
14 *cation associated with the credential*
15 *awarded for such program of study;*
16 *and*

17 “(II) *when combined with the*
18 *program length of such additional edu-*
19 *cational program for licensure or*
20 *board certification, has a total pro-*
21 *gram length that exceeds the applicable*
22 *measurement period under clause (i)*
23 *for such program of study,*
24 *except that in no case shall the annual*
25 *earnings of an individual be measured more*

1 *than 1 year after the individual completes*
 2 *such additional educational program.”.*

3 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON INSTITU-**
 4 **TIONAL QUALITY AND INTEGRITY (NACIQI).**

5 *Section 114 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20*
 6 *U.S.C. 1011c) is amended—*

7 *(1) in subsection (b)—*

8 *(A) in paragraph (2), by redesignating sub-*
 9 *paragraphs (A) through (C) as clauses (i)*
 10 *through (iii), respectively, and adjusting the*
 11 *margins accordingly;*

12 *(B) by striking “Individuals” and inserting*
 13 *the following:*

14 *“(A) IN GENERAL.—Individuals”;*

15 *(C) in clause (ii), as so redesignated, by*
 16 *striking “and training” and inserting “and*
 17 *skills development”;*

18 *(D) by adding at the end of paragraph (2)*
 19 *the following:*

20 *“(B) DISQUALIFICATION.—No individual*
 21 *may be appointed as a member of the Committee*
 22 *if such individual has a significant conflict of*
 23 *interest, such as being a current regulator (such*
 24 *as a State authorizer), that would require the in-*

1 *dividual to frequently be recused from serving as*
2 *a member of the Committee.”; and*

3 *(E) in paragraph (3)—*

4 *(i) by striking “Except as provided in*
5 *paragraph (5), the term” and inserting*
6 *“The term”; and*

7 *(ii) by adding at the end the following:*
8 *“If, during a term of office of a member of*
9 *the Committee, the member has a changed*
10 *circumstance that results in such member*
11 *having a significant conflict of interest (as*
12 *described in paragraph (2)(B)), such mem-*
13 *ber shall vacate such office and a new mem-*
14 *ber shall be appointed to serve the remain-*
15 *der of such term in accordance with this*
16 *paragraph.”;*

17 *(2) in subsection (c)—*

18 *(A) in paragraph (4), by adding “and” at*
19 *the end;*

20 *(B) in paragraph (5), by striking “; and”*
21 *at the end and inserting a period; and*

22 *(C) by striking paragraph (6);*

23 *(3) in subsection (d)(2), by inserting at the end*
24 *the following: “The name of any member of the Com-*
25 *mittee who has been recused with respect to an agen-*

1 *da item of the meeting shall be included in such agen-*
2 *da.”;*

3 *(4) in subsection (e)(2)(D), by striking “, includ-*
4 *ing any additional functions established by the Sec-*
5 *retary through regulation”; and*

6 *(5) in subsection (f), by striking “September 30,*
7 *2021” and inserting “September 30, 2028”.*

8 **SEC. 4. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

9 *Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this*
10 *Act, shall be construed to prevent religious accreditors from*
11 *holding and enforcing religious standards on institutions*
12 *they choose to accredit.*

Union Calendar No. 360

119TH CONGRESS
1ST Session

H. R. 4054

[Report No. 119-414]

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to
reform accreditation.

DECEMBER 18, 2025

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed