

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7327

To require the Secretary of Education to establish a pilot program to award grants to eligible organizations to carry out activities related to book access, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 3, 2026

Mrs. FOUSHEE (for herself and Ms. ADAMS) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Education to establish a pilot program to award grants to eligible organizations to carry out activities related to book access, 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 “Empowering Young
5 Readers Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM FOR BOOK ACCESS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
8 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Education

1 shall establish a pilot program to award grants, on a com-
2 petitive basis, to eligible organizations to carry out the ac-
3 tivities described in subsection (c).

4 (b) APPLICATION.—An eligible organization desiring
5 a grant under this section shall submit an application to
6 the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and con-
7 taining such information as the Secretary may reasonably
8 require, including—

9 (1) information about past work the eligible or-
10 ganization has performed related to book access;

11 (2) a comprehensive strategic plan for how the
12 eligible organization would use a grant under this
13 section to carry out one or more of the activities de-
14 scribed in subsection (c), including a description of
15 how such activities would address the needs of the
16 community served by the eligible organization; and

17 (3) a letter from a leader in the community
18 served by the eligible organization in support of the
19 eligible organization and the comprehensive strategic
20 plan.

21 (c) ACTIVITIES.—Grant funds awarded under this
22 section shall be used by an eligible entity to carry out one
23 or more of the following activities:

24 (1) Purchasing or otherwise acquiring new or
25 used books for distribution to children.

1 (2) Distributing new or used books to children,
2 including through delivery or in-person events.

3 (3) Donating new or used books to public li-
4 braries.

5 (4) Hosting or organizing literacy-related pro-
6 gramming for children and their families, including
7 book fairs, reading hours, book drives, and story
8 times.

9 (5) Any other activity the Secretary determines
10 appropriate related to book access.

11 (d) GRANT AMOUNTS AND DURATION.—A grant
12 under this section—

13 (1) shall be in an amount that is not more than
14 \$200,000; and

15 (2) shall be for a period of 2 years.

16 (e) VIEWPOINT-NEUTRAL.—In awarding grants
17 under this section, the Secretary shall ensure that applica-
18 tions submitted pursuant to subsection (b) are reviewed
19 based on viewpoint-neutral criteria.

20 (f) REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the
21 grant period of the final grant awarded pursuant to this
22 section expires, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a
23 report on the pilot program, which shall include—

24 (1) qualitative data with respect to the activities
25 carried out by grant recipients, including the num-

1 ber of books provided to children and their families;
2 and

3 (2) to the extent data is available, information
4 about how child literacy rates in communities served
5 by eligible organizations changed during and after
6 such activities were carried out.

7 (g) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
8 tion may be construed as restricting, infringing upon, or
9 otherwise interfering with the ability of a public library
10 or other entity to reject all or part of a donation of books.

11 (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

12 (1) CHILD.—The term “child” means an indi-
13 vidual under 19 years of age.

14 (2) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATION.—The term “eligi-
15 ble organization” means—

16 (A) a nongovernmental organization; or

17 (B) a nonprofit organization.

18 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
19 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection
20 \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2026, to remain available
21 through fiscal year 2027.

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