

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8659

To amend the definition of a professional student in the Higher Education Act of 1965.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 4, 2026

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia (for herself, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. BERGMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To amend the definition of a professional student in the Higher Education Act of 1965.

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 “Nursing is a Profes-
5 sional Degree Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PROFESSIONAL STUDENT AND PROFESSIONAL DE-**
7 **GREE DEFINED.**

8 Section 455(a)(4)(C) of the Higher Education Act of
9 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(a)(4)(C)) is amended—

(1) in clause (ii), by striking “, as defined under section 668.2 of title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this paragraph),”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) PROFESSIONAL DEGREE.—In this paragraph, the term ‘professional degree’—

“(I) means a degree that signifies both completion of the academic requirements for beginning practice in a given profession (for which professional licensure is also commonly required) and a level of professional skill beyond that normally required for a bachelor’s degree; and

“(II) includes each of the following degrees:

“(aa) Pharmacy
(Pharm.D.).

“(bb) Dentistry (D.D.S. or
D.M.D.).

“(cc) Veterinary Medicine
(D.V.M.).

1 “(dd) Chiropractic (D.C. or
2 D.C.M.).

3 “(ee) Law (L.L.B. or J.D.).

4 “(ff) Medicine (M.D.).

5 “(gg) Optometry (O.D.).

6 “(hh) Osteopathic Medicine/
7 Osteopathy (D.O.).

8 “(ii) Podiatric Medicine/Po-
9 diatry (D.P.M., D.P., or Pod.D.).

10 “(jj) Theology/Theological
11 Studies (M.Div. or M.H.L.).

12 “(kk) Clinical Psychology
13 (Psy.D. or Ph.D.).

14 “(ll) Nursing (MSN, DNP,
15 DNAP, or Ph.D.).

16 “(mm) Any other degree
17 that meets the requirements of
18 subclause (I), as determined by
19 the Secretary.”.

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