

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2451

To ensure that paraprofessionals and education support staff are paid a living wage.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 24, 2025

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WELCH, and Ms. WARREN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To ensure that paraprofessionals and education support staff are paid a living wage.

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 “Pay Paraprofessionals
5 and Support Staff Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PAY PARAPROFESSIONALS AND EDUCATION SUP-**
7 **PORT STAFF ACT.**

8 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ESEA.—The terms “English learner”, “local educational agency”, “paraprofessional”, “professional development”, “Secretary”, and “State” have the meanings given the terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(2) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT PERCENTAGE.—The term “annual adjustment percentage” means, with respect to a fiscal year, a percentage equal to the estimated percentage change in the Consumer Price Index, as determined by the Secretary, for the most recent calendar year ending prior to the beginning of such fiscal year.

(3) MINIMUM SALARY FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “minimum salary for paraprofessional and education support staff” means an amount, determined by the State, that all full-time equivalent employees employed by a local educational agency are required by the State to be compensated by such agency as their annual base salary, and which—

(i) is greater than the amount described in subparagraph (B); and

1 (ii) increases as the experience of such
 2 school staff increases.

3 (B) INDEXING SALARY GROWTH TO INFLA-
 4 TION.—

5 (i) FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH
 6 2030.—For each of fiscal years 2026
 7 through 2030, the amount described in
 8 this subparagraph is \$45,000.

9 (ii) FISCAL YEARS 2031 AND AFTER.—
 10 For each fiscal year in the fiscal year pe-
 11 riod 2031 through 2035 and in each subse-
 12 quent 5 fiscal year period, the amount de-
 13 scribed this subparagraph shall be equal to
 14 the amount applicable for each fiscal year
 15 in the previous 5 fiscal year period, in-
 16 creased by the greater of—

17 (I) the aggregate annual adjust-
 18 ment percentage over the previous 5
 19 fiscal years; or

20 (II) 2 percent of the amount ap-
 21 plicable under this subsection for the
 22 previous 5 fiscal year period.

23 (4) MINIMUM WAGE FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL
 24 AND EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “minimum wage for paraprofessional and education support staff” means an amount, determined by the State, that all part-time equivalent staff employed by a local educational agency are required by the State to be paid by such agency, and which—

(i) is greater than the amount described in subparagraph (B); and

(ii) increases as the experience of such school staff increases.

(B) INDEXING SALARY GROWTH TO INFLATION.—

(i) FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH 2030.—For each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030, the amount described in this subparagraph is \$30.00 an hour.

(ii) FISCAL YEARS 2031 AND AFTER.—For each fiscal year in the fiscal year period 2031 through 2035 and in each subsequent 5 fiscal year period, the amount described this subparagraph shall be equal to the amount applicable for each fiscal year in the previous 5 fiscal year period, increased by the greater of—

1 (I) the aggregate annual adjust-
2 ment percentage over the previous 5
3 fiscal years; or

4 (II) 2 percent of the amount ap-
5 plicable under this subsection for the
6 previous 5 fiscal year period.

7 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to en-
8 sure that paraprofessionals and education support staff,
9 who are the backbone of our Nation’s public education sys-
10 tem, are—

11 (1) paid a living wage, which means—

12 (A) a minimum salary for paraprofessional
13 and education support staff; or

14 (B) a minimum wage for paraprofessional
15 and education support staff;

16 (2) compensated in a manner that recognizes
17 some regions may have higher costs of living and
18 therefore necessitate higher minimum salaries or
19 wages;

20 (3) recognized as public servants who provide
21 essential services that keep our Nation’s public
22 schools running and our students thriving; and

23 (4) provided safe working conditions and treat-
24 ed with the respect and dignity they deserve.

1 (c) AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATIONS.—In ad-
 2 dition to amounts otherwise available, there are authorized
 3 to be appropriated and there are appropriated out of any
 4 money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to the
 5 Department of Education, to carry this section—

6 (1) for fiscal year 2026, \$25,000,000,000; and

7 (2) for each succeeding fiscal year, the amount
 8 appropriated under this section for the preceding fis-
 9 cal year, increased by the annual adjustment per-
 10 centage.

11 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF GRANTS.—

12 (1) RESERVATIONS.—From the total amount
 13 appropriated under subsection (c) for a fiscal year,
 14 the Secretary shall reserve not more than—

15 (A) 1 percent to provide grants, contracts,
 16 or cooperative agreements to regional edu-
 17 cational laboratories (established under section
 18 174 of the Education Sciences Reform Act of
 19 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9564)) or qualified nonprofit
 20 organizations to assist States that receive
 21 grants under this section carry out applied re-
 22 search or evaluations in providing paraprofes-
 23 sionals and education support staff with oppor-
 24 tunities for personnel preparation, professional
 25 development, credentials, or certifications, such

1 as to assist in the provision of special education
 2 and related services or to serve English learn-
 3 ers; and

4 (B) 1 percent for technical assistance and
 5 program administration of this section.

6 (2) GRANTS.—The Secretary shall award
 7 grants to States from allotments under paragraph
 8 (3) to ensure that all local educational agencies have
 9 the resources necessary to pay paraprofessionals and
 10 education support staff a living wage, which
 11 means—

12 (A) the minimum salary for paraprofes-
 13 sional and education support staff; or

14 (B) a minimum wage for paraprofessional
 15 and education support staff.

16 (3) ALLOTMENTS.—From the amounts appro-
 17 priated under subsection (b) that are remaining
 18 after making the reservations described in paragraph
 19 (1) for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall allot to each
 20 State that has submitted an approved application
 21 under subsection (d), an amount that bears the
 22 same relationship to the remainder as the amount
 23 the State received under part A of title I of the Ele-
 24 mentary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
 25 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.) for the preceding fiscal year

1 bears to the amount all States received under that
2 subpart for the preceding fiscal year.

3 (e) STATE APPLICATION.—In order to receive a grant
4 under this section, a State shall submit an application to
5 the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and including
6 such information as the Secretary may reasonably require,
7 including the following:

8 (1) A timeline, consistent with the goals re-
9 quired under paragraph (2), to ensure that, not later
10 than 4 years after the receipt of a grant under this
11 section—

12 (A) the annual base salary of a full-time
13 equivalent employee employed by a local edu-
14 cational agency in the State is not less than the
15 minimum salary for paraprofessional and edu-
16 cation support staff, as determined by the
17 State; and

18 (B) all part-time equivalent staff employed
19 by a local educational agency in the State are
20 paid not less than the minimum wage for para-
21 professional and education support staff, as de-
22 termined by the State.

23 (2) For each fiscal year in the timeline specified
24 in paragraph (1), statewide annual goals for increas-
25 ing average salary or wage baselines of paraprofes-

1 sionals and education support staff in a manner
2 that—

3 (A) annually proposes a percentage in-
4 crease in the average wage or salary of para-
5 professionals and education support staff;

6 (B) provides for the first increase to occur
7 not later than the second fiscal year a State re-
8 ceives a grant under this section; and

9 (C) makes significant progress toward en-
10 suring that, by the end of the timeline described
11 in subparagraph (A)—

12 (i) the annual base salary of a full-
13 time equivalent employee employed by a
14 local educational agency in the State is not
15 less than the minimum salary for para-
16 professional and education support staff,
17 as determined by the State; and

18 (ii) all part-time equivalent staff em-
19 ployed by a local educational agency in the
20 State are paid not less than the minimum
21 wage for paraprofessional and education
22 support staff, as determined by the State.

23 (3) The State's proposed formula to subgrant
24 funds to local educational agencies as described in
25 subsection (g) in a manner that ensures—

1 (A) local educational agencies that serve a
 2 high number or percentage of students from
 3 low-income backgrounds receive substantial
 4 subgrant allocations that enable such agencies
 5 to meet the requirements described in subpara-
 6 graphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) not later
 7 than 2 years after the receipt of a subgrant;
 8 and

9 (B) all remaining local educational agen-
 10 cies in the State meet the State's requirements
 11 in the timeline described in paragraph (1).

12 (f) IMPROVING PARAPROFESSIONAL AND SCHOOL
 13 STAFF WAGES AND SALARIES.—

14 (1) STATE RESERVATION.—A State that re-
 15 ceives a grant under this section may reserve not
 16 more than 2 percent of the total grant amount re-
 17 ceived by the State for technical assistance, adminis-
 18 trative purposes, and statewide efforts to provide
 19 paraprofessionals and education support staff with
 20 opportunities for personnel preparation, professional
 21 development, credentials, or certifications, such as to
 22 assist in the provision of special education and re-
 23 lated services or to serve English learners.

24 (2) IMPROVING WAGES AND SALARIES.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
2 graph (B), a State that receives a grant under
3 this section shall ensure that, within a timeline
4 determined by the State under subsection (e)(1)
5 and approved by the Secretary—

6 (i) the annual base salary of a full-
7 time equivalent employee employed by a
8 local educational agency in the State is not
9 less than the minimum salary for para-
10 professional and education support staff,
11 as determined by the State; and

12 (ii) all part-time equivalent staff em-
13 ployed by a local educational agency in the
14 State are paid not less than the minimum
15 wage for paraprofessional and education
16 support staff, as determined by the State.

17 (B) TIMING.—The Secretary shall ensure
18 that, by not later than 4 years after the date
19 of implementation of the final regulations
20 issued under this Act, each State that receives
21 a grant under this section meets the salary and
22 wage requirements specified in subparagraph
23 (A).

24 (g) SUBGRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGEN-
25 CIES.—

1 (1) ALLOCATION.—Each State shall allocate
2 not less than 98 percent of the grant funds awarded
3 to the State under this section as subgrants to local
4 educational agencies (including charter schools that
5 are local educational agencies) in the State under
6 the formula determined by the State under sub-
7 section (e)(3) and approved by the Secretary.

8 (2) USES OF SUBGRANT FUNDS.—A local edu-
9 cational agency that receives a subgrant under para-
10 graph (1)—

11 (A) shall use the subgrant funds to comply
12 with the State’s requirements in accordance
13 with subsection (e) guaranteeing that no full-
14 time equivalent employee of the agency is paid
15 less than the minimum salary for paraprofes-
16 sional and education support staff and no part-
17 time equivalent employee of the agency is paid
18 less than the minimum wage for paraprofes-
19 sional and education support staff; and

20 (B) may use subgrant funds—

21 (i) to increase salaries or wages for
22 teachers, paraprofessionals, specialized in-
23 structional support personnel, classified
24 school employees, principals, other school
25 leaders, school librarians, school bus driv-

1 ers, and other staff across their careers;
2 and

3 (ii) to provide paraprofessionals and
4 education support staff with opportunities
5 for personnel preparation, professional de-
6 velopment, credentials, or certifications,
7 such as to assist in the provision of special
8 education and related services or to serve
9 English learners.

10 (3) CONTRACTED STAFF.—

11 (A) IN GENERAL.—A local educational
12 agency that receives a subgrant under this sec-
13 tion shall ensure that staff employed by such
14 agency or in any contract such agency enters
15 into, are paid an amount not less than the min-
16 imum salary for paraprofessionals and edu-
17 cation support staff or the minimum wage for
18 paraprofessionals and education support staff in
19 the State.

20 (B) MONITORING.—A State that receives a
21 grant under this section shall monitor local edu-
22 cational agencies for compliance with subpara-
23 graph (A).

24 (h) RULES.—

1 (1) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION FOR COLLECTIVE
2 BARGAINING.—

3 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
4 graph (B), nothing in this Act shall be con-
5 strued to alter or otherwise affect the rights,
6 remedies, and procedures afforded to school or
7 local educational agency employees under Fed-
8 eral, State, or local laws (including applicable
9 regulations or court orders) or under the terms
10 of collective bargaining agreements, memoranda
11 of understanding, or other agreements between
12 such employers and their employees.

13 (B) COMPLIANCE.—Subparagraph (A)
14 shall not be construed to exempt a State, local
15 educational agency, or school from complying
16 with salary or wage requirements in this Act or
17 from negotiating in compliance with State labor
18 laws to comply with this Act.

19 (2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION FOR ADDITIONAL
20 PAY OR OTHER SALARY AUGMENTING SYSTEMS.—
21 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prevent
22 States or local educational agencies from
23 supplementing the annual base salary of teachers,
24 paraprofessionals, education support staff, or other
25 staff employed by such agencies—

1 (A) for additional skills, knowledge, duties,
2 and responsibilities;

3 (B) by salary systems that increase teach-
4 ers' compensation through supplemental pay
5 that is not part of an annual base salary; or

6 (C) through the provision of bonuses, sti-
7 pends, or awards.

8 (3) NO WAIVER AUTHORITY.—Section 8401 of
9 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of
10 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7861) shall not apply to this Act.

11 (4) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—A State shall use Fed-
13 eral funds received under this Act only to sup-
14 plement the funds that would, in the absence of
15 such Federal funds, be made available from
16 State and local sources for elementary and sec-
17 ondary education, and not to supplant State
18 and local funds.

19 (B) COMPLIANCE.—The Secretary shall
20 use funds described in subsection (d)(1)(B) to
21 administer programs authorized under this sub-
22 part and to issue technical assistance to States
23 and to monitor and enforce the requirements
24 under such programs.

○