

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5295

To amend the Public Health Service Act to strengthen mentorship and career development support for early-career researchers receiving funding from the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 6, 2026

Mr. McCORMICK (for himself and Mr. COONS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to strengthen mentorship and career development support for early-career researchers receiving funding from the National Institutes of Health, 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 “NIH Mentorship Mod-
5 ernization Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MENTORSHIP AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUP-**
2 **PORT.**

3 Part G of title IV of the Public Health Service Act
4 (42 U.S.C. 288 et set seq.) is amended by adding at the
5 end the following:

6 **“SEC. 489A. MENTORSHIP AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT**
7 **SUPPORT.**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish
9 minimum mentorship standards and support requirements
10 applicable to entities receiving career development, institu-
11 tional training, fellowship, research education, and other
12 research training awards from the National Institutes of
13 Health that the Secretary determines would benefit from
14 additional mentorship support beyond statutory or award-
15 specific requirements. In carrying out this section, the
16 Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable—

17 “(1) build upon existing mentorship require-
18 ments, reporting processes, and award documenta-
19 tion, including annual progress reports add other ex-
20 isting reporting mechanisms of the National Insti-
21 tutes of Health;

22 “(2) avoid duplicative administrative or report-
23 ing requirements; and

24 “(3) provide flexibility for institutions with
25 mentorship programs that are substantially similar

1 to the standards and requirements established under
 2 this section.

3 “(b) MENTORSHIP STANDARDS.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The standards and proce-
 5 dures established under subsection (a) shall include
 6 standards for measurable minimum expectations re-
 7 lating to—

8 “(A) regular mentor-mentee engagement;

9 “(B) professional development support and
 10 career guidance;

11 “(C) periodic assessment of mentee re-
 12 search and career progress;

13 “(D) minimum qualification requirements
 14 and mentorship competencies for mentors par-
 15 ticipating in programs supported by such
 16 awards; and

17 “(E) such other mentorship activities as
 18 the Secretary determines appropriate.

19 “(2) COMPLIANCE.—The Secretary shall estab-
 20 lish procedures for entities to certify, through exist-
 21 ing annual reporting requirements of the National
 22 Institutes of Health, compliance with the standards
 23 established under this section.

24 “(c) DISSEMINATION OF MENTORSHIP PRACTICES
 25 AND GUIDANCE.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary—

2 “(A) shall encourage dissemination of evi-
3 dence-based mentorship practices and guidance,
4 including mentoring compacts, mentor-mentee
5 agreements, individualized development plans,
6 mentor training curricula, and other evidence-
7 based mentorship resources, relating to the
8 standards established under this section; and

9 “(B) may encourage entities to adopt such
10 practices and guidance, as appropriate.

11 “(2) CROSS-INSTITUTION MENTORING.—The
12 practices and guidance issued under this subsection
13 may address mentorship arrangements involving
14 multiple institutions, including documentation of
15 mentoring responsibilities and recognition of co-men-
16 tors.

17 “(d) MENTOR SUPPORT.—Subject to the availability
18 of appropriations, the Secretary may provide supplemental
19 funding or other support to institutions to assist with im-
20 plementation of the mentorship standards established
21 under this section. Such support may include funding for
22 mentor training, mentorship coordination, implementation
23 of mentorship agreements, mentor development activities,
24 and other reasonable expenses associated with carrying
25 out this section.

1 “(e) CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.—The Secretary
2 shall periodically review mentorship practices across ca-
3 reer development and research training awards of the Na-
4 tional Institutes of Health and update mentorship stand-
5 ards established under this section, as appropriate, to re-
6 flect evidence-based practices.

7 “(f) APPLICABILITY.—The standards and procedures
8 established under this section shall apply only to awards
9 made on or after the date that is 2 years after the date
10 of enactment of this section, except that a recipient of an
11 award made prior to such date may voluntarily comply
12 with such standards and procedures.”.

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