

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3596

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to institutions of higher education for demonstration projects to ensure equal educational opportunity in postsecondary education for individuals with learning disabilities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 30, 1998

Mrs. MEEK of Florida (for herself and Mrs. NORTHUP) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to institutions of higher education for demonstration projects to ensure equal educational opportunity in postsecondary education for individuals with learning disabilities.

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 “Learning Differences
5 Act of 1998”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Disability is a natural part of the human
2 experience and encompasses physical, mental, and
3 cognitive impairments. The term “learning disabili-
4 ty” refers to a number of specific learning disabili-
5 ties, such as dyslexia. These disorders may manifest
6 themselves in an imperfect ability to listen, think,
7 speak, read, write, spell, reason, or perform mathe-
8 matical calculations. Learning disabilities tend to en-
9 dure from childhood into adulthood.

10 (2) 2,600,000 of the 5,100,000 children with
11 disabilities served under the Individuals with Dis-
12 abilities Education Act in elementary and secondary
13 education are children with learning disabilities.

14 (3) About 2 percent of all undergraduate stu-
15 dents nationwide report having a learning disability.
16 Different teaching strategies are needed to enable
17 them to develop their talents and perform up to
18 their capacity.

19 (4) A greater number of individuals with learn-
20 ing disabilities can benefit from postsecondary edu-
21 cation, and contribute more fully to society and the
22 economy, with adequate and appropriate programs,
23 services, adaptations, and accommodations.

24 (5) Civil rights laws protect individuals with
25 disabilities, including individuals with learning dis-

1 abilities, in postsecondary education, and institutions
2 of higher education require assistance to comply
3 with these laws.

4 (6) Exemplary institutions of higher education
5 dedicated to meeting the needs of individuals with
6 learning disabilities exist and can serve as a national
7 resource for other institutions in educating these
8 students.

9 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are as fol-
10 lows:

11 (1) To assist model institutions of higher edu-
12 cation with demonstrated prior experience in serving
13 individuals with learning disabilities.

14 (2) To demonstrate and disseminate programs,
15 services, adaptations, accommodations, strategies,
16 and approaches to teaching individuals with disabil-
17 ities in postsecondary education.

18 **SEC. 3. PROGRAM AUTHORITY.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education may
20 award grants to, and enter into contracts and cooperative
21 agreements with, not more than 5 institutions of higher
22 education that are described in section 4 for demonstra-
23 tion projects to develop, test, and disseminate, in accord-
24 ance with section 5, methods, techniques, and procedures

1 for ensuring equal educational opportunity for individuals
2 with learning disabilities in postsecondary education.

3 (b) AWARD BASIS.—Grants, contracts, and coopera-
4 tive agreements shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

5 (c) AWARD PERIOD.—Grants, contracts, and cooper-
6 ative agreements shall be awarded for a period of 3 years.

7 **SEC. 4. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.**

8 Entities eligible to apply for a grant, contract, or co-
9 operative agreement under this Act are institutions of
10 higher education (as defined in section 1201 of the Higher
11 Education Act of 1956) with demonstrated prior experi-
12 ence with meeting the postsecondary educational needs of
13 individuals with learning disabilities.

14 **SEC. 5. REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.**

15 A recipient of a grant, contract, or cooperative agree-
16 ment under this Act shall use the funds received under
17 this Act to carry out each of the following activities:

18 (1) Developing or identifying innovative, effec-
19 tive, and efficient approaches, strategies, supports,
20 modifications, adaptations, and accommodations that
21 enable individuals with learning disabilities to fully
22 participate in postsecondary education.

23 (2) Synthesizing research and other information
24 related to the provision of services to individuals
25 with learning disabilities in postsecondary education.

1 (3) Conducting training sessions for personnel
2 from other institutions of higher education to enable
3 them to meet the special needs of postsecondary stu-
4 dents with learning disabilities.

5 (4) Preparing and disseminating products based
6 upon the activities described in paragraphs (1)
7 through (3).

8 (5) Coordinating findings and products from
9 the activities described in paragraphs (1) through
10 (4) with other similar products and findings through
11 participation in conferences, groups, and profes-
12 sional networks involved in the dissemination of
13 technical assistance and information on postsecond-
14 ary education.

15 **SEC. 6. PRIORITY.**

16 The Secretary of Education shall ensure that, to the
17 extent feasible, there is a national geographic distribution
18 of grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements awarded
19 under this Act throughout the States, except that the Sec-
20 retary may give priority to a historically Black college or
21 university that satisfies the requirements of section 4.

1 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
3 this Act \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1999
4 through 2001.

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