

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 639

To prevent truancy and reduce juvenile crime.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 17, 1999

Mr. BINGAMAN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To prevent truancy and reduce juvenile crime.

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 “Truancy Prevention
5 and Juvenile Crime Reduction Act of 1999”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Truancy is often the first sign of trouble—
9 the first indicator that a young person is giving up
10 and losing his or her way.

11 (2) Many students who become truant eventu-
12 ally drop out of school, and high school drop outs

1 are two and a half times more likely to be on welfare
2 than high school graduates, twice as likely to be un-
3 employed, or if employed, earn lower salaries.

4 (3) Truancy is the top-ranking characteristic of
5 criminals—more common than such factors as com-
6 ing from single-parent families and being abused as
7 children.

8 (4) High rates of truancy are linked to high
9 daytime burglary rates and high vandalism.

10 (5) As much as 44 percent of violent juvenile
11 crime takes place during school hours.

12 (6) As many as 75 percent of children ages 13
13 to 16 who are arrested and prosecuted for crimes
14 are truants.

15 (7) Some cities report as many as 70 percent
16 of daily student absences are unexcused, and the
17 total number of absences in a single city can reach
18 4,000 per day.

19 (8) Society pays a significant social and eco-
20 nomic cost due to truancy: only 34 percent of in-
21 mates have completed high school education; 17 per-
22 cent of youth under age 18 entering adult prisons
23 have not completed grade school (8th grade or less),
24 25 percent completed 10th grade, and 2 percent
25 completed high school.

1 (9) Truants and later high school drop outs
 2 cost the Nation \$240,000,000,000 in lost earnings
 3 and foregone taxes over their lifetimes, and the cost
 4 of crime control is staggering.

5 (10) In many instances, parents are unaware a
 6 child is truant.

7 (11) Effective truancy prevention, early inter-
 8 vention, and accountability programs can improve
 9 school attendance and reduce daytime crime rates.

10 (12) There is a lack of targeted funding for ef-
 11 fective truancy prevention programs in current law.

12 **SEC. 3. GRANTS.**

13 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

14 (1) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.—The term “eligi-
 15 ble partnership” means a partnership between 1 or
 16 more qualified units of local government and 1 or
 17 more local educational agencies.

18 (2) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
 19 “local educational agency” has the meaning given
 20 the term in section 14101 of the Elementary and
 21 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 8801).

22 (3) QUALIFIED UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERN-
 23 MENT.—The term “qualified unit of local govern-
 24 ment” means a unit of local government that has in
 25 effect, as of the date on which the eligible partner-

1 ship submits an application for a grant under this
2 section, a statute or regulation that meets the re-
3 quirements of section 223(a)(14) of the Juvenile
4 Justice and Delinquency and Prevention Act of 1974
5 (42 U.S.C. 5633(a)(14)).

6 (4) UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term
7 “unit of local government” means any city, county,
8 township, town, borough, parish, village, or other
9 general purpose political subdivision of a State, or
10 any Indian tribe.

11 (b) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The Attorney General, in
12 consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall make
13 grants in accordance with this section on a competitive
14 basis to eligible partnerships to reduce truancy and the
15 incidence of daytime juvenile crime.

16 (c) MAXIMUM AMOUNT; ALLOCATION; RENEWAL.—

17 (1) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The total amount
18 awarded to an eligible partnership under this section
19 in any fiscal year shall not exceed \$100,000.

20 (2) ALLOCATION.—Not less than 25 percent of
21 each grant awarded to an eligible partnership under
22 this section shall be allocated for use by the local
23 educational agency or agencies participating in the
24 partnership.

1 (3) RENEWAL.—A grant awarded under this
2 section for a fiscal year may be renewed for an addi-
3 tional period of not more than 2 fiscal years.

4 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Grant amounts made avail-
6 able under this section may be used by an eligible
7 partnership to comprehensively address truancy
8 through the use of—

9 (A) parental involvement in prevention ac-
10 tivities, including meaningful incentives for pa-
11 rental responsibility;

12 (B) sanctions, including community serv-
13 ice, or drivers' license suspension for students
14 who are habitually truant;

15 (C) parental accountability, including fines,
16 teacher-aid duty, or community service;

17 (D) in-school truancy prevention programs,
18 including alternative education and in-school
19 suspension;

20 (E) involvement of the local law enforce-
21 ment, social services, judicial, business, and re-
22 ligious communities, and nonprofit organiza-
23 tions;

1 (F) technology, including automated tele-
2 phone notice to parents and computerized at-
3 tendance system;

4 (G) elimination of 40-day count and other
5 unintended incentives to allow students to be
6 truant after a certain time of school year; or

7 (H) juvenile probation officer collaboration
8 with 1 or more local educational agencies.

9 (2) MODEL PROGRAMS.—In carrying out this
10 section, the Attorney General may give priority to
11 funding the following programs and programs that
12 attempt to replicate one or more of the following
13 model programs:

14 (A) The Truancy Intervention Project of
15 the Fulton County, Georgia, Juvenile Court.

16 (B) The TABS (Truancy Abatement and
17 Burglary Suppression) program of Milwaukee,
18 Wisconsin.

19 (C) The Roswell Daytime Curfew Program
20 of Roswell, New Mexico.

21 (D) The Stop, Cite and Return Program of
22 Rohnert Park, California.

23 (E) The Stay in School Program of New
24 Haven, Connecticut.

1 (F) The Atlantic County Project Helping
2 Hand of Atlantic County, New Jersey.

3 (G) The THRIVE (Truancy Habits Re-
4 duced Increasing Valuable Education) initiative
5 of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

6 (H) The Norfolk, Virginia project using
7 computer software and data collection.

8 (I) The Community Service Early Inter-
9 vention Program of Marion, Ohio.

10 (J) The Truancy Reduction Program of
11 Bakersfield, California.

12 (K) The Grade Court program of Farm-
13 ington, New Mexico.

14 (L) Any other model program that the At-
15 torney General determines to be appropriate.

16 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
17 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
18 \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2000, 2001, and
19 2002.

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