

107TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5648

To establish a grant program to provide comprehensive eye examinations to children, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 16, 2002

Mr. PASCRELL (for himself, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. NORTON, and Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To establish a grant program to provide comprehensive eye examinations to children, 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 “Children’s Vision Im-
5 provement and Learning Readiness Act of 2002”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) Eighty percent of what children learn is ac-
9 quired through the visual processing of information.

1 (2) Visual impairment is one of the 10 most
2 common causes of disability in America. In children,
3 visual impairment is associated with developmental
4 delays and the need for special education, vocational,
5 and social services. At least 20 percent of children
6 with learning disabilities have been found to have
7 prominent visual information processing problems.

8 (3) It is estimated that more than 10,000,000
9 children (from birth to age 10) suffer from vision
10 problems, with one in 20 preschoolers and one in
11 four school aged children affected.

12 (4) It is estimated that only 14 percent of chil-
13 dren under the age of six receive a comprehensive
14 eye examination. Only one-third of all children have
15 had an eye examination or vision screening prior to
16 entering school.

17 **SEC. 3. GRANTS REGARDING COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAMI-**
18 **NATIONS FOR CHILDREN.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and
20 Human Services (referred to in this section as the “Sec-
21 retary”) may make grants to States for the purpose of—

22 (1) providing comprehensive eye examinations
23 for children, with priority given to school-based pro-
24 grams for children who are under the age of nine;
25 and

1 (2) developing and disseminating, to parents,
2 teachers, and the public, educational materials with
3 regard to the need and benefits of comprehensive eye
4 examinations for children.

5 (b) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall, as appro-
6 priate, coordinate the program under subsection (a) with
7 the program under section 330 of the Public Health Serv-
8 ice Act (relating to health centers), the program under
9 title XIX of the Social Security Act (relating to the Med-
10 icaid program), the program under title XXI of such Act
11 (relating to the State children’s health insurance pro-
12 gram), and with other Federal or State programs that
13 provide services to children.

14 (c) RELATIONSHIP TO PAYMENTS UNDER OTHER
15 PROGRAMS.—A grant may be made under subsection (a)
16 only if the State involved agrees that the State will not
17 make payments from the grant for any item or service to
18 the extent that payment has been made, or can reasonably
19 be expected to be made, with respect to such item or
20 service—

21 (1) under any State compensation program,
22 under an insurance policy, or under any Federal or
23 State health benefits program; or

24 (2) by an entity that provides health services on
25 a prepaid basis.

1 (d) EVALUATIONS.—A grant may be made under
2 subsection (a) only if the State involved agrees that, not
3 later than one year after the date on which amounts under
4 the grant are first received by the State, and annually
5 thereafter while receiving amounts under the grant, the
6 State will submit to the Secretary an evaluation of the
7 operations and activities carried out under the grant,
8 including—

9 (1) a description of the health status outcomes
10 of children provided with assistance under the grant;

11 (2) an assessment of the utilization of com-
12 prehensive eye examination services as a result of
13 the activities carried out under the grant;

14 (3) the collection, analysis, and reporting of
15 comprehensive eye examination data according to
16 guidelines prescribed by the Director of the Centers
17 for Disease Control and Prevention; and

18 (4) such other information as the Secretary
19 may require.

20 (e) APPLICATION.—A grant may be made under sub-
21 section (a) only if an application for the grant is submitted
22 to the Secretary and the application is in such form, is
23 made in such manner, and contains such information as
24 the Secretary may require, including a plan for the use
25 of the grant.

1 (f) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the
2 term “comprehensive eye examination” includes an assess-
3 ment of a patient’s history, general medical observation,
4 external and ophthalmoscopic examination, and assess-
5 ment of gross visual fields performed by an optometrist
6 or an ophthalmologist.

7 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the
8 purpose of carrying out this section, there are authorized
9 to be appropriated \$75,000,000 for fiscal year 2003, and
10 such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years
11 2004 through 2006.

