

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 126

To establish a program to promote child literacy by making books available through early learning and other child care programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 2003

Mr. HOLT (for himself, Mr. CUNNINGHAM, and Mrs. NORTHUP) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish a program to promote child literacy by making books available through early learning and other child care programs, 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 “Book Stamp Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) Literacy is fundamental to all learning.

1 (2) Between 40 and 60 percent of the Nation’s
2 children do not read at grade level, particularly chil-
3 dren in families or school districts that are chal-
4 lenged by significant financial or social instability.

5 (3) Increased investments in child literacy are
6 needed to improve opportunities for children and the
7 efficacy of the Nation’s education investments.

8 (4) Increasing access to books in the home is
9 an important means of improving child literacy,
10 which can be accomplished nationally at modest cost.

11 (5) Effective channels for book distribution al-
12 ready exist through child care providers.

13 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) **EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM.**—The term
16 “early learning”, used with respect to a program,
17 means a program of activities designed to facilitate
18 development of cognitive, language, motor, and so-
19 cial-emotional skills in children under age 6 as a
20 means of enabling the children to enter school ready
21 to learn, such as a Head Start or Early Head Start
22 program carried out under the Head Start Act (42
23 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), or a State pre-kindergarten
24 program.

1 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
2 the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

3 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means the 50
4 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth
5 of Puerto Rico, Guam, the United States Virgin Is-
6 lands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of
7 the Northern Mariana Islands.

8 (4) STATE AGENCY.—The term “State agency”
9 means an agency designated under section 658D of
10 the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of
11 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858b).

12 **SEC. 4. GRANTS TO STATE AGENCIES.**

13 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary
14 shall establish and carry out a program to promote child
15 literacy and improve children’s access to books at home
16 and in early learning and other child care programs, by
17 making books available through early learning and other
18 child care programs.

19 (b) GRANTS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program,
21 the Secretary shall make grants to State agencies
22 from allotments determined under paragraph (2).

23 (2) ALLOTMENTS.—For each fiscal year, the
24 Secretary shall allot to each State an amount that
25 bears the same ratio to the total of the available

1 funds for the fiscal year as the amount the State re-
2 ceives under section 6580(b) of the Child Care and
3 Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
4 9858m(b)) for the fiscal year bears to the total
5 amount received by all States under that section for
6 the fiscal year.

7 (c) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive an allot-
8 ment under this section, a State shall submit an applica-
9 tion to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and
10 containing such information as the Secretary may require.

11 (d) ACCOUNTABILITY.—The provisions of sections
12 658I(b) and 658K(b) of the Child Care and Development
13 Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858g(b), 9858i(b))
14 shall apply to States receiving grants under this Act, ex-
15 cept that references in those sections—

16 (1) to a subchapter shall be considered to be
17 references to this Act; and

18 (2) to a plan or application shall be considered
19 to be references to an application submitted under
20 subsection (c).

21 (e) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “available
22 funds”, used with respect to a fiscal year, means the total
23 of—

1 dren’s access to books at home and in early learning
2 and other child care programs.

3 (2) ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS.—To be eligible to re-
4 ceive a payment under paragraph (1), a provider
5 shall—

6 (A)(i) be a center-based child care pro-
7 vider, a group home child care provider, or a
8 family child care provider, described in section
9 658P(5)(A) of the Child Care and Development
10 Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
11 9858n(5)(A)); or

12 (ii) be a Head Start agency designated
13 under section 641 of the Head Start Act (42
14 U.S.C. 9836), an entity that receives assistance
15 under section 645A of such Act to carry out an
16 Early Head Start program or another provider
17 of an early learning program; and

18 (B) provide services in an area where chil-
19 dren face high risks of literacy difficulties, as
20 defined by the Secretary.

21 (b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—A child care resource and
22 referral agency that receives a contract under section 5
23 to provide payments to eligible providers shall—

24 (1) consult with local individuals and organiza-
25 tions concerned with early literacy (including parents

1 and organizations carrying out the Reach Out and
2 Read, First Book, and Reading Is Fundamental pro-
3 grams) regarding local book distribution needs;

4 (2) make reasonable efforts to learn public de-
5 mographic and other information about local fami-
6 lies and child literacy programs carried out by the
7 eligible providers, as needed to inform the agency's
8 decisions as the agency carries out the contract;

9 (3) coordinate local orders of the books made
10 available under this Act;

11 (4) distribute, to each eligible provider that re-
12 ceives a payment under this Act, not fewer than 1
13 book every 6 months for each child served by the
14 provider for more than 3 of the preceding 6 months;

15 (5) use not more than 5 percent of the funds
16 made available through the contract to provide train-
17 ing and technical assistance to the eligible providers
18 on the effective use of books with young children at
19 different stages of development; and

20 (6) be a training resource for eligible providers
21 that want to offer parent workshops on developing
22 reading readiness.

23 (c) DISCOUNTS.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Federal funds made avail-
25 able under this Act for the purchase of books may

1 only be used to purchase books on the same terms
2 as are customarily available in the book industry to
3 entities carrying out nonprofit bulk book purchase
4 and distribution programs.

5 (2) TERMS.—An entity offering books for pur-
6 chase under this Act shall be present to have met
7 the requirements of paragraph (1), absent contrary
8 evidence, if the terms include a discount of 43 per-
9 cent off the catalogue price of the books, with no ad-
10 ditional charge for shipping and handling of the
11 books.

12 (d) ADMINISTRATION.—The child care resource and
13 referral agency may not use more than 6 percent of the
14 funds made available through the contract for administra-
15 tive costs.

16 **SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

17 Not later than 2 years of the date of enactment of
18 this Act, the Secretary shall prepare and submit to Con-
19 gress a report on the implementation of the activities car-
20 ried out under this Act.

21 **SEC. 8. SPECIAL POSTAGE STAMPS FOR CHILD LITERACY.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 4 of title 39, United
23 States Code is amended by adding at the end the fol-
24 lowing:

1 **“§ 417. Special postage stamps for child literacy**

2 “(a) In order to afford the public a convenient way
3 to contribute to funding for child literacy, the Postal Serv-
4 ice shall establish a special rate of postage for first-class
5 mail under this section. The stamps that bear the special
6 rate of postage shall promote childhood literacy and shall,
7 to the extent practicable, contain an image relating to a
8 character in a children’s book or cartoon.

9 “(b)(1) The rate of postage established under this
10 section—

11 “(A) shall be equal to the regular first-class
12 rate of postage, plus a differential of not to exceed
13 25 percent;

14 “(B) shall be set by the Governors in accord-
15 ance with such procedures as the Governors shall by
16 regulation prescribe (in lieu of the procedures de-
17 scribed in chapter 36); and

18 “(C) shall be offered as an alternative to the
19 regular first-class rate of postage.

20 “(2) The use of the special rate of postage established
21 under this section shall be voluntary on the part of postal
22 patrons.

23 “(c)(1) Of the amounts becoming available for child
24 literacy pursuant to this section, the Postal Service shall
25 pay 100 percent to the Department of Health and Human
26 Services.

1 “(2) Payments made under this subsection to the De-
2 partment shall be made under such arrangements as the
3 Postal Service shall by mutual agreement with such De-
4 partment establish in order to carry out the objectives of
5 this section, except that, under those arrangements, pay-
6 ments to such agency shall be made at least twice a year.

7 “(3) In this section, the term ‘amounts becoming
8 available for child literacy pursuant to this section’
9 means—

10 “(A) the total amounts received by the Postal
11 Service that the Postal Service would not have re-
12 ceived but for the enactment of this section; reduced
13 by

14 “(B) an amount sufficient to cover reasonable
15 costs incurred by the Postal Service in carrying out
16 this section, including costs attributable to the print-
17 ing, sale, and distribution of stamps under this sec-
18 tion,

19 as determined by the Postal Service under regulations that
20 the Postal Service shall prescribe.

21 “(d) It is the sense of Congress that nothing in this
22 section should—

23 “(1) directly or indirectly cause a net decrease
24 in total funds received by the Department of Health
25 and Human Services, or any other agency of the

1 Government (or any component or program of the
2 Government), below the level that would otherwise
3 have been received but for the enactment of this sec-
4 tion; or

5 “(2) affect regular first-class rates of postage
6 or any other regular rates of postage.

7 “(e) Special postage stamps made available under
8 this section shall be made available to the public beginning
9 on such date as the Postal Service shall by regulation pre-
10 scribe, but in no event later than 12 months after the date
11 of enactment of this section.

12 “(f) The Postmaster General shall include in each re-
13 port provided under section 2402, with respect to any pe-
14 riod during any portion of which this section is in effect,
15 information concerning the operation of this section, ex-
16 cept that, at a minimum, each report shall include infor-
17 mation on—

18 “(1) the total amounts described in subsection
19 (c)(3)(A) that were received by the Postal Service
20 during the period covered by such report; and

21 “(2) of the amounts described in paragraph (1),
22 how much (in the aggregate and by category) was
23 required for the purposes described in subsection
24 (c)(3)(B).

1 “(g) This section shall cease to be effective at the
2 end of the 2-year period beginning on the date on which
3 special postage stamps made available under this section
4 are first made available to the public.”.

5 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The analysis for
6 chapter 4 of title 39, United States Code, is amended by
7 adding at the end the following:

“417. Special postage stamps for child literacy.”.

8 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

9 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
10 this Act \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2003 through
11 2007.

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