

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1787

To conduct 1 or more higher education and career readiness demonstration projects for rural, low-income students.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 13, 2007

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. SPECTER, and Mr. SANDERS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To conduct 1 or more higher education and career readiness demonstration projects for rural, low-income students.

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 “Rural Students Col-
5 lege, Career, and Community Readiness Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) roughly 1 in 4 public schools are located in
9 rural America, accounting for 14.5 percent of total
10 public school enrollment;

1 (2) rural boys and girls demonstrate lower edu-
2 cational aspirations than their urban and suburban
3 peers;

4 (3) fewer than 1 in 7 rural residents have ob-
5 tained a 4-year baccalaureate degree, compared with
6 nearly 1 in 4 metropolitan area residents;

7 (4) roughly half of rural secondary school stu-
8 dents live in counties that have no 4-year institu-
9 tions of higher education;

10 (5) there are major gaps in substantive re-
11 search about effective rural education strategies;

12 (6) rural economic development is a continuing
13 effort supported by the Federal Government, and
14 rural schools can be important engines for economic
15 development and long-term community and regional
16 growth;

17 (7) one of the best ways to address the needs
18 of students in rural communities is to help young
19 people finish secondary school and attend college by
20 providing programs that promote higher education
21 throughout childhood and adolescence, and sup-
22 porting programs that expose young people to the
23 world of careers; and

1 (8) effective rural policy requires an emphasis
2 on the development of human capital through edu-
3 cation.

4 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

5 The purpose of this Act is to conduct a demonstration
6 project to improve the educational and career outcomes
7 of rural, low-income students in grades 7 through 12 that
8 will seek to—

9 (1) improve the academic motivation and per-
10 formance of rural students;

11 (2) improve student academic success in rural
12 schools, including with respect to performance on
13 statewide assessments;

14 (3) improve secondary school graduation rates
15 in rural schools;

16 (4) increase the number of rural students en-
17 gaged in rigorous, college-preparatory coursework;

18 (5) increase the number of rural students tak-
19 ing college entrance examinations, such as the SATs
20 or ACTs;

21 (6) increase the rates among rural students of
22 application to institutions of higher education, en-
23 rollment in such institutions, and institution of high-
24 er education program completion;

1 (7) prepare rural students to become the next
2 generation of leaders in their States and commu-
3 nities;

4 (8) complement Federal and State efforts to
5 build the State and local workforce and economy;
6 and

7 (9) increase the number of people within rural
8 communities who are able to meet the workforce
9 needs of the local community and enhance the State,
10 local, and regional economies.

11 **SEC. 4. DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.**

12 (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From amounts appro-
13 priated under section 9, the Secretary shall award grants
14 to not more than 2 non-profit entities to enable the enti-
15 ties to carry out the activities described in section 5 in
16 rural schools and rural local educational agencies.

17 (b) APPLICATION.—A non-profit entity desiring to re-
18 ceive a grant under this section shall submit an application
19 to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and con-
20 taining such information as the Secretary may require.

21 (c) SELECTION BASIS.—In awarding grants under
22 this Act, the Secretary shall give priority to a non-profit
23 entity that has—

24 (1) existing capacity to implement program ele-
25 ments with the rigor called for in this Act;

1 (2) history and experience in working with rural
2 schools and supporting student achievement goals;

3 (3) organizational capacity to successfully im-
4 plement the demonstration project; and

5 (4) capacity and commitment to serve rural
6 schools that have student populations with histori-
7 cally low rates of secondary school graduation, insti-
8 tution of higher education enrollment, or institution
9 of higher education program completion.

10 (d) AMOUNT AND DURATION OF GRANTS.—

11 (1) AMOUNT; DURATION.—Each grant awarded
12 by the Secretary under this Act shall be in an
13 amount of not less than \$2,500,000 for each fiscal
14 year of the grant period, and shall be awarded for
15 a period of 6 years, in order to enable cohorts of
16 students in grade 7 to participate in the demonstra-
17 tion project under this Act for 6 consecutive years
18 in the grant.

19 (2) USE OF GRANT FUNDS FOR EVALUATION.—

20 Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a non-profit entity
21 receiving a grant under this Act may use remaining
22 grant funds after the grant period has expired in
23 order to carry out the evaluation required under sec-
24 tion 6 during the 3-year period immediately fol-
25 lowing the last year of the grant period.

1 **SEC. 5. PROGRAM OPERATIONS.**

2 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—A non-profit entity re-
 3 ceiving a grant under this Act shall develop and carry out
 4 a rural school-based, institution of higher education prepa-
 5 ration and career exploration demonstration project
 6 through which the non-profit entity shall—

7 (1)(A) in the case of an entity receiving a grant
 8 of \$5,000,000 or more per year—

9 (i) serve a minimum of 40 rural schools
 10 and 7,500 students; and

11 (ii) serve rural schools in not fewer than 3
 12 geographic regions of the United States (such
 13 as the Southwest, Midwest, Southeast, North-
 14 east, or Northwest regions); or

15 (B) in the case of an entity receiving a grant
 16 of less than \$5,000,000 per year—

17 (i) serve a minimum of 20 rural schools
 18 and 3,000 students; and

19 (ii) serve rural schools in not fewer than 2
 20 such geographic regions;

21 (2) in selecting rural schools to participate in
 22 the project—

23 (A) collectively reach diverse racial and
 24 ethnic student populations; and

25 (B) ensure a sufficient participation of stu-
 26 dents in both grade 7 and grade 9 cohorts, as

1 described in paragraph (4), in order to allow for
 2 a full measure of the project's impact as both
 3 a 6-year program and a 4-year program;

4 (3) partner with rural local educational agencies
 5 and rural schools to carry out the activities under
 6 this subsection, and enter into a written agreement
 7 with each participating local educational agency or
 8 rural school in which—

9 (A) the entity agrees to carry out the ac-
 10 tivities described in paragraph (5) for the co-
 11 horts described in paragraph (4) at the identi-
 12 fied rural school; and

13 (B) the rural local educational agency or
 14 rural school agrees—

15 (i) to allow the entity access to stu-
 16 dents in the cohorts during the school day
 17 for the purposes of administering the dem-
 18 onstration project; and

19 (ii) to cooperate in the project evalua-
 20 tion, including the collection and sharing of
 21 data; and

22 (4) for each rural school with which the entity
 23 enters into a written agreement—

24 (A) identify the cohort of students who will
 25 be entering grade 7 in the first year of the

1 grant under this Act, and serves such students
2 for 6 consecutive years; or

3 (B) identify the cohort of students who will
4 be entering grade 9 in the first year of the
5 grant under this Act, and serves such students
6 for 4 consecutive years;

7 (5) provide participating students in a cohort at
8 a partnering rural school with a program that—

9 (A) includes approximately 25 hours per
10 grade of program workshops during the school
11 day over the course of grades 7 through 12 or,
12 in the case of a grade 9 cohort, grades 9
13 through 12, to provide services including—

14 (i) providing education planning to
15 the students;

16 (ii) providing information for the stu-
17 dents about the opportunities for and the
18 importance of higher education and post-
19 secondary training;

20 (iii) developing career awareness in
21 the students;

22 (iv) building the students' career,
23 leadership, and life skills;

24 (v) building awareness in the students
25 of the State's future labor needs and the

1 importance of young people to the State's
2 economy, and coordinating with the State's
3 efforts to develop the State's workforce
4 and economy; and

5 (vi) creating awareness in the stu-
6 dents of local businesses and integrating
7 expertise from local business and nonprofit
8 providers into the program, as appropriate;

9 (B) reaches all students in the cohort who
10 are participating in the demonstration project;
11 and

12 (C) is implemented consistently across all
13 participating rural school sites; and

14 (6) evaluates the project, as described in section
15 6.

16 (b) STAFF.—A non-profit entity receiving a grant
17 under this Act shall hire, train, and employ personnel to
18 administer and deliver the demonstration project. These
19 individuals shall function as employees of the nonprofit en-
20 tity but shall coordinate with the partnering rural schools
21 and rural local educational agencies in the delivery of the
22 program, consistent with the applicable agreements de-
23 scribed in subsection (a)(3).

1 **SEC. 6. EVALUATION.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—A non-profit entity receiving a
3 grant under this Act shall use a portion of grant funds
4 to award a contract, on a competitive basis, to a third-
5 party evaluator to enable the evaluator—

6 (1) to rigorously evaluate the impact of the en-
7 tity's demonstration project under this Act in ac-
8 cordance with subsection (d); and

9 (2) to submit the annual evaluation required
10 under subsection (e).

11 (b) COMPETITIVE BASIS AND PREFERENCE.—The
12 non-profit entity shall select the evaluator for a contract
13 under this section by a competitive process, with a pref-
14 erence given to evaluators using evaluation models that
15 utilize experimental design methodology.

16 (c) APPROVAL BY THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary
17 or the Secretary's designee shall approve the evaluator se-
18 lected by the non-profit entity before the entity enters into
19 a contract with the evaluator.

20 (d) CONTENT OF EVALUATION.—An evaluator receiv-
21 ing a contract for a demonstration project under this Act
22 shall perform an evaluation of the project that—

23 (1) follows rigorous standards of third-party
24 evaluation in determining the effects of the dem-
25 onstration project under this Act on—

1 (A) the rigor of secondary school course-
2 taking the rigor of secondary school courses
3 taken by participating students;

4 (B) the performance of participating stu-
5 dents on statewide assessments;

6 (C) the engagement of participating stu-
7 dents in school, including attendance rates, dis-
8 cipline data, and grades;

9 (D) the rates of participating students tak-
10 ing college entrance examinations, such as the
11 SAT or ACT;

12 (E) the career aspirations of participating
13 students;

14 (F) the rates of participating students en-
15 rolling in career and technical education
16 courses, dual enrollment courses, advanced
17 placement courses, or other related programs;

18 (G) the secondary school graduation rates
19 of participating students;

20 (H) the rates among participating students
21 of institution of higher education application,
22 enrollment, and program completion; and

23 (I) the participating students' awareness of
24 State economic indicators and workforce needs;
25 and

1 (2) follows a rigorous model so that findings re-
2 garding the program outcomes meet standards of
3 scientifically-based research, as defined in section
4 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education
5 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801); and

6 (3) addresses the scalability and replicability of
7 the program model with respect to other rural areas,
8 including—

9 (A) the identification of elements that are
10 integral to program effectiveness;

11 (B) efficacy in use of Federal funds; and

12 (C) the impact of coordination with State
13 workforce development efforts.

14 (e) ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT.—An evaluator
15 receiving a contract under this section shall submit an an-
16 nual evaluation on the progress of the program to the Sec-
17 retary.

18 **SEC. 7. REPORTS.**

19 (a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—A non-profit entity receiving
20 a grant under this Act shall submit an annual report on
21 the progress of the demonstration project to the Secretary
22 for each year of the grant period.

23 (b) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

24 (1) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than 18
25 months after amounts are appropriated under this

1 Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress an in-
2 terim report on the progress of the demonstration
3 projects funded under this Act that includes the out-
4 come measures described in section 6(d)(1).

5 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days
6 after the last day of the grant period for all grants
7 under this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Con-
8 gress a final report on the results of the program,
9 which report shall include—

10 (A) the outcome measures described in sec-
11 tion 6(d)(1); and

12 (B) recommendations for such legislative
13 or administrative action as the Secretary deter-
14 mines appropriate.

15 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

16 In this Act:

17 (1) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
18 term “institution of higher education” has the
19 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
20 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

21 (2) RURAL LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—
22 The term “rural local educational agency” means a
23 local educational agency that meets—

24 (A) the eligibility requirements under sec-
25 tion 6211(b) (20 U.S.C. 7345(b)) for participa-

tion in the program described in subpart 1 of
 part B of title VI of the Elementary and Sec-
 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7345
 et seq.); or

(B) the eligibility requirements under sec-
 tion 6221(b) (20 U.S.C. 7351(b)) for participa-
 tion in the program described in subpart 2 of
 part B of such title VI (20 U.S.C. 7351 et
 seq.).

(3) RURAL SCHOOL.—The term “rural school”
 means a school served by a rural local educational
 agency.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
 the Secretary of Education.

SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
 this Act \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008
 through 2013.

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