

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 583

To create a competitive grant program for States to enable the States to award salary bonuses to highly qualified elementary school or secondary school teachers who teach, or commit to teach, for at least 3 academic years in a school served by a rural local educational agency.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 14, 2007

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

A BILL

To create a competitive grant program for States to enable the States to award salary bonuses to highly qualified elementary school or secondary school teachers who teach, or commit to teach, for at least 3 academic years in a school served by a rural local educational agency.

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 Teacher Reten-
5 tion Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) More than 8,000,000 children, representing
2 21 percent of all public school children in the United
3 States, attend public schools in rural areas.

7 (3) More than 400,000 educators, or 31 percent
8 of all public school teachers, teach in rural schools.

12 (5) Despite lower salaries, rural school teachers
13 typically teach multiple subjects and perform their
14 jobs with fewer resources than their counterparts in
15 other regions.

16 (6) One of the most critical challenges facing
17 rural school districts is in attracting and retaining
18 qualified teachers.

19 (7) Rural school districts tend to have higher
20 teacher turnover rates than school districts in other
21 regions.

22 (8) High teacher turnover has a negative im-
23 pact on student performance, school district per-
24 formance, and the ability of teachers to become
25 highly qualified.

1 SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

2 In this Act:

3 (1) CHILD WITH A DISABILITY.—The term
4 “child with a disability” has the meaning given the
5 term in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabil-
6 ities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401).7 (2) HIGHLY QUALIFIED.—Except as provided in
8 paragraph (3), the term “highly qualified” when
9 used with respect to a teacher, has the meaning
10 given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary
11 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
12 7801).13 (3) HIGHLY QUALIFIED SPECIAL EDUCATION
14 TEACHER.—The term “highly qualified” when used
15 with respect to a special education teacher, has the
16 meaning given the term in section 602 of the Indi-
17 viduals with Disabilities Education Act.18 (4) LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT.—The term
19 “limited English proficient” has the meaning given
20 the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Sec-
21 ondary Education Act of 1965.22 (5) LOW-INCOME STUDENT.—The term “low-in-
23 come student” means a child eligible to be counted
24 under section 1124(c)(1)(A) of the Elementary and
25 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
26 6333(c)(1)(A)).

5 (7) RURAL LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph
7 graph (B), the term “rural local educational
8 agency” means a local educational agency
9 that—

10 (i)(I) is described in section 6211(b),
11 6221(b)(1), or 9101(26)(C) of the Elemen-
12 tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
13 (20 U.S.C. 7345(b), 7351(b)(1),
14 7801(26)(C)); or

15 (II) serves a high number or percent-
16 age of children who are Native Hawaiian
17 as defined in section 7207(1) of the Ele-
18 mentary and Secondary Education Act of
19 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7517(1)); and

20 (ii) has experienced a teacher turnover
21 rate of not less than 10 percent of all the
22 teachers teaching in the schools served by
23 the local educational agency in any of the
24 3 academic years preceding the date of en-
25 actment of this Act.

9 SEC. 4. PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

10 (a) GRANTS.—From amounts appropriated under
11 section 6 for each fiscal year, the Secretary shall carry
12 out a 5-year pilot program under which the Secretary
13 awards grants, on a competitive basis, to not more than
14 10 States to enable the States to award salary bonuses
15 to highly qualified teachers or highly qualified special edu-
16 cation teachers who teach, or commit to teach, for at least
17 3 academic years, in an elementary school or secondary
18 school served by the same rural local educational agency.

19 (b) AWARD BASIS.—The Secretary shall award
20 grants under this section on the basis of the needs of rural
21 local educational agencies within a State for recruiting
22 and retaining highly qualified teachers or highly qualified
23 special education teachers.

24 (c) CONSIDERATION OF NEEDS.—In determining the
25 needs of rural local educational agencies for recruiting and

1 retaining highly qualified teachers and highly qualified
2 special education teachers under subsection (b), the Sec-
3 retary shall consider 1 or more of the following:

4 (1) The eligibility of a rural local educational
5 agency for assistance under part B of title VI of the
6 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
7 (20 U.S.C. 7341 et seq.).

8 (2) The impact on a rural local educational
9 agency of low-income students who are served by the
10 rural local educational agency.

11 (3) The impact on a rural local educational
12 agency of limited English proficient students who
13 are served by the rural local educational agency.

14 (4) The impact on a rural local educational
15 agency of migrant students who are served by the
16 rural local educational agency.

17 (5) The number or percentage of rural local
18 educational agencies described in section
19 9101(26)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
20 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801(26)(C)).

21 (6) The impact on a rural local educational
22 agency of children with a disability who are served
23 by the rural local educational agency.

24 (7) The long-term plans of a State to improve
25 the recruitment and retention of highly qualified

1 teachers and highly qualified special education
2 teachers in rural local educational agencies within
3 the State.

4 (d) APPLICATION.—A State that desires to receive a
5 grant under this section shall submit an application to the
6 Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied
7 by such information as the Secretary may require. The
8 application shall contain a plan for the proposed distribu-
9 tion and use of the grant funds among rural local edu-
10 cational agencies within the State.

11 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—Grant funds under this section
12 shall be used to provide salary bonuses for highly qualified
13 teachers or highly qualified special education teachers who
14 teach, or commit to teach, for at least 3 academic years,
15 in an elementary school or secondary school served by the
16 same rural local educational agency.

17 **SEC. 5. STUDY AND REPORTS.**

18 (a) STUDY.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry
20 out a study of each project that is funded under this
21 Act. The study shall track and assess the implemen-
22 tation and effectiveness of each project.

23 (2) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—From the
24 amount appropriated under section 6 for fiscal year
25 2008, the Secretary shall reserve not more than 1

1 percent or \$500,000, whichever is greater, to carry
2 out the study described in paragraph (1).

3 (b) REPORTS.—

4 (1) ANNUAL REPORTS FROM STATES.—Each
5 State receiving a grant under this Act shall submit
6 an annual report to the Secretary regarding each
7 project within the State that is funded under this
8 Act. The report shall contain such information as
9 the Secretary determines necessary to evaluate the
10 project.

11 (2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
13 submit a report on the study described in sub-
14 section (a)(1) to the Committee on Health,
15 Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate
16 and to the Committee on Education and Labor
17 of the House of Representatives not later than
18 September 30, 2012.

19 (B) CONTENTS.—The report shall in-
20 clude—

21 (i) the number of rural local edu-
22 cational agencies assisted under this Act;
23 (ii) the characteristics of such rural
24 local educational agencies with respect to

1 the considerations of needs described in
2 section 4(c);

3 (iii) the number and demographic
4 characteristics of teachers receiving bo-
5 nuses under this Act;

6 (iv) the impact of the bonuses pro-
7 vided under this Act on the ability of rural
8 local educational agencies assisted under
9 this Act to recruit and retain highly quali-
10 fied teachers and highly qualified special
11 education teachers; and

12 (v) such other information and anal-
13 ysis as the Secretary determines necessary
14 to evaluate the projects.

1.5 SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION.

16 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
17 this Act \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and such sums
18 as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2009
19 through 2012.

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