

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 639

To establish digital and wireless networks to advance online higher education opportunities for minority students.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 15, 2007

Mr. PRYOR introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To establish digital and wireless networks to advance online higher education opportunities for minority 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 “ED 1.0 Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress makes the following findings:

7 (1) Access to technology can improve grade and
8 test averages, graduation rates, and retention rates,
9 in addition to increasing the number of graduates in
10 science and technology disciplines.

1 (2) Minority-serving institutions historically
2 have an important role in reaching an underserved
3 population, and minority-serving institutions in eco-
4 nomically disadvantaged areas face particular hard-
5 ships in acquiring funds to sustain and expand their
6 technological resources.

7 (3) Low-income areas are technologically under-
8 served.

9 (4) Congress and the technological community
10 should do all they can to find new and creative ways
11 to bridge the current technology gap.

12 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

13 In this Act:

14 (1) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Adminis-
15 trator” means the Administrator of the National
16 Telecommunications and Information Administra-
17 tion.

18 (2) **ELIGIBLE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.**—
19 The term “eligible educational institution” means an
20 institution that is—

21 (A) a historically Black college or univer-
22 sity;

23 (B) a Hispanic-serving institution as that
24 term is defined in section 502(a)(5) of the

1 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
2 1101a(a)(5));

3 (C) a tribally controlled college or univer-
4 sity as that term is defined in section 2(a)(4)
5 of the Tribally Controlled College or University
6 Assistance Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 1801(a)(4));

7 (D) an Alaska Native-serving institution as
8 that term is defined in section 317(b)(2) of the
9 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
10 1059d(b)(2)); or

11 (E) a Native Hawaiian-serving institution
12 as that term is defined in section 317(b)(4) of
13 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
14 1059d(b)(4)).

15 (3) HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE OR UNI-
16 VERSITY.—The term “historically Black college or
17 university” means a part B institution as that term
18 is defined in section 322(2) of the Higher Education
19 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061(2)).

20 **SEC. 4. MINORITY ONLINE DEGREE PILOT PROGRAM.**

21 (a) PILOT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established within
23 the National Telecommunications and Information
24 Administration a pilot program under which the Ad-
25 ministrator shall award 4 grants to eligible edu-

1 educational institutions to enable the eligible edu-
2 cational institutions to develop digital and wireless
3 networks for online educational programs of study
4 within the eligible educational institutions.

5 (2) GRANT NUMBER, DURATION, AND
6 AMOUNT.—

7 (A) NUMBER.—The Administrator shall
8 award a total of 4 grants under this section.

9 (B) DURATION.—Each grant under this
10 section shall be awarded for a period of 6 years.

11 (C) ANNUAL GRANT PAYMENT
12 AMOUNTS.—The Administrator shall make
13 grant payments under this section in the
14 amount of—

15 (i) \$1,000,000 for the first fiscal year
16 of a grant awarded under this section;

17 (ii) \$600,000 for each of the second
18 through fifth such fiscal years; and

19 (iii) \$100,000 for the sixth such fiscal
20 year.

21 (b) PRIORITY.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—In awarding grants under
23 this section the Administrator shall give priority to
24 an eligible educational institution that, according to
25 the most recent data available (including data avail-

1 able from the Bureau of the Census), serves a coun-
2 ty—

3 (A) in which 50 percent of the residents of
4 the county are members of a racial or ethnic
5 minority;

6 (B) in which less than 18 percent of the
7 residents of the county have obtained a bacca-
8 laurate degree or a higher education;

9 (C) that has an unemployment rate of 7
10 percent or greater;

11 (D) in which 19 percent or more of the
12 residents of the county live in poverty;

13 (E) that has a negative population growth
14 rate; or

15 (F) that has a median family income of
16 \$32,000.

17 (2) HIGHEST PRIORITY.—In awarding grants
18 under this section the Administrator shall give the
19 highest priority to an eligible educational institution
20 that meets the greatest number of requirements de-
21 scribed in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of para-
22 graph (1).

23 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible educational institu-
24 tion receiving a grant under this section may use the grant
25 funds—

1 (1) to acquire equipment, instrumentation, net-
2 working capability, hardware, software, digital net-
3 work technology, wireless technology, or wireless in-
4 frastructure;

5 (2) to develop and provide educational services,
6 including faculty development; or

7 (3) to develop strategic plans for information
8 technology investments.

9 (d) MATCHING NOT REQUIRED.—The Administrator
10 shall not require an eligible educational institution to pro-
11 vide matching funds for a grant awarded under this sec-
12 tion.

13 (e) REPORT.—Not later than November 1 of each
14 year, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on
15 Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and
16 the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House
17 of Representatives, a report evaluating the progress, dur-
18 ing the preceding fiscal year, of the pilot program assisted
19 under this section.

20 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
22 appropriated to carry out this section—

23 (A) \$4,500,000 for fiscal year 2008;

24 (B) \$2,400,000 for each of the fiscal years
25 2009 through 2012; and

1 (C) \$500,000 for fiscal year 2013.

2 (2) AVAILABILITY.—Funds appropriated under
3 paragraph (1) shall remain available until expended.

4 (g) LIMITATION ON USE OF OTHER FUNDS.—The
5 Administrator shall carry out this section only with
6 amounts appropriated in advance specifically to carry out
7 this section.

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