

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3475

To increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2012

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

A BILL

To increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry.

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 “Women and Minorities
5 in STEM Booster Act of 2012”.

6 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPA-**
7 **TION OF WOMEN AND UNDERREPRESENTED**
8 **MINORITIES IN STEM FIELDS.**

9 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) One of the core missions of the National
2 Science Foundation is “to achieve excellence in U.S.
3 science, technology, engineering and mathematics
4 (STEM) education”.

5 (2) According to the National Academy of
6 Sciences, STEM education at the undergraduate
7 level is vital to developing a workforce that will allow
8 the United States to remain the leader in the 21st
9 century global economy.

10 (3) According to the National Academy of
11 Sciences, in order to maintain scientific and engi-
12 neering leadership amid increasing economic and
13 educational globalization, the United States must
14 aggressively pursue the innovative capacity of all
15 people in the United States—women and men.

16 (4) According to the August 2011 report
17 “Women in STEM: A Gender Gap to Innovation”,
18 the Department of Commerce found the following:

19 (A) “According to the Census Bureau’s
20 2009 American Community Survey (ACS),
21 women comprise 48 percent of the U.S. work-
22 force but just 24 percent of STEM workers.”.

23 (B) “[B]etween 2000 and 2009, women’s
24 share of the STEM workforce remained con-
25 stant at 24 percent, while their share of all col-

1 lege-educated workers increased from 46 to 49
2 percent”.

3 (C) “The ACS data on undergraduate
4 fields of study show that women account for
5 nearly half of employed college graduates age
6 25 and over, but only about 25 percent of em-
7 ployed STEM degree holders and an even
8 smaller share—just about 20 percent—of
9 STEM degree holders working in STEM jobs.”.

10 (5) In 2007, underrepresented minority groups
11 comprised 33.2 percent of the college-age population
12 of the United States, but only 17.7 percent of un-
13 dergraduate students earning a baccalaureate degree
14 in a STEM field.

15 (6) The Higher Education Research Institute at
16 the University of California, Los Angeles, found
17 that, while freshmen from underrepresented minority
18 groups express an interest in pursuing a STEM un-
19 dergraduate degree at the same rate as all other
20 freshmen, only 22.1 percent of Latino students, 18.4
21 percent of African-American students, and 18.8 per-
22 cent of Native American students studying in STEM
23 fields complete their degree within 5 years, com-
24 pared to an approximate 33 percent and 42 percent

1 5-year completion rate for White and Asian stu-
2 dents, respectively.

3 (7) According to the National Action Council
4 for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., no one race or
5 ethnic category will be a majority by 2050, and as
6 the United States works to remain competitive in
7 the world of technological innovation, the United
8 States should address the need to increase the num-
9 ber of individuals from underrepresented minority
10 segments of the population who work in engineering.

11 (b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Director of the
12 National Science Foundation, acting through the Edu-
13 cation and Human Resources Directorate and not less
14 than 1 research directorate of the National Science Foun-
15 dation, shall award grants to eligible entities, on a com-
16 petitive basis, to enable such eligible entities to carry out
17 the activities described in subsection (e), in order to in-
18 crease the participation of women and underrepresented
19 minorities in the fields of science, technology, engineering,
20 and mathematics.

21 (c) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this section, the term “el-
22 igible entity” means—

23 (1) a department of science, technology, engi-
24 neering, or mathematics at an institution of higher

1 education, as defined under section 101 of the High-
2 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001);

3 (2) a consortium of departments described in
4 paragraph (1);

5 (3) a department or consortium described in
6 this subsection, in partnership with a department,
7 college, or school of education at such institution of
8 higher education; or

9 (4) a nonprofit organization, which may in-
10 clude—

11 (A) a nonprofit scientific or professional
12 society or organization that represents one or
13 more science or engineering disciplines; or

14 (B) a nonprofit organization that has the
15 primary mission of advancing the participation
16 of underrepresented segments of the population
17 in science and engineering.

18 (d) APPLICATION.—Each eligible entity that desires
19 to receive a grant under this section shall submit an appli-
20 cation to the Director of the National Science Foundation
21 at such time, in such manner, and containing such infor-
22 mation as the Director of the National Science Founda-
23 tion may reasonably require.

24 (e) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—An eligible entity that
25 receives a grant under this section shall use such grant

1 funds to carry out the following activities designed to in-
2 crease the participation of women and underrepresented
3 minorities in the fields of science, technology, engineering,
4 and mathematics:

5 (1) Online workshops.

6 (2) Mentoring programs that partner science,
7 technology, engineering, or mathematics profes-
8 sionals with students.

9 (3) Internships for undergraduate and graduate
10 students in the fields of science, technology, engi-
11 neering, and mathematics.

12 (4) Conducting outreach programs that provide
13 elementary school and secondary school students
14 with opportunities to increase their exposure to the
15 fields of science, technology, engineering, or mathe-
16 matics.

17 (5) Such additional programs as the Director of
18 the National Science Foundation may determine.

19 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
20 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
21 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013, 2014, and
22 2015.

○