

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1509

To establish a 5-year demonstration program to provide skills to classroom teachers and staff who work with children with autism spectrum disorders.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 11, 2013

Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. MCKINLEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To establish a 5-year demonstration program to provide skills to classroom teachers and staff who work with children with autism spectrum disorders.

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 “Autism Understanding
5 and Training in School Methodologies for Educators Act
6 of 2013”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 The Congress finds as follows:

1 (1) Autism is a group of complex developmental
2 brain disorders collectively referred to as Autism
3 Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) that can cause a wide
4 range of symptoms, skills, and levels of impairment
5 including social, communication and behavior
6 changes.

7 (2) Autism spectrum disorders are also referred
8 to as pervasive developmental disorders and include
9 subcategories of classic autism with ranges from
10 high functioning autism (HFA) to low functioning
11 autism, Asperger syndrome, and pervasive develop-
12 mental disorder—not otherwise specified (PDD–
13 NOS), as well as more severe cases of Rhett Syn-
14 drome and Child Disintegrative Disorder.

15 (3) Autism affects an estimated 1 in 88 chil-
16 dren by age 8 and 1 in 54 boys.

17 (4) An estimated 1,500,000 individuals in the
18 United States are affected by autism.

19 (5) More children will be diagnosed with autism
20 this year than with AIDS, diabetes, and cancer com-
21 bined.

22 (6) Autism is the fastest growing serious devel-
23 opmental disability in the United States.

1 (7) Autism costs the Nation over
2 \$35,000,000,000 per year, a figure expected to sig-
3 nificantly increase in the next decade.

4 (8) Boys are five times more likely than girls to
5 have autism.

6 (9) There is currently no medical cure for au-
7 tism, but there are evidence-based educational meth-
8 ods proven to be effective in improving outcomes for
9 students with autism and research demonstrating
10 the benefits of routine and consistency.

11 (10) The least restrictive environment for edu-
12 cating students with autism spectrum disorder, in-
13 cluding, but not limited to, students with high func-
14 tioning autism, Asperger syndrome, and PDD–NOS,
15 often is best achieved by enrollment in a general
16 education classroom with proper support.

17 (11) General education classroom teachers and
18 staff often are not adequately trained to work effec-
19 tively with students with autism spectrum disorders,
20 who have a wide diversity of characteristics, al-
21 though such skills may be attained through qualified
22 training programs and may be relatively easy to im-
23 plement in school settings.

24 (12) Training general education classroom
25 teachers and staff to implement evidence-based prac-

1 tices for educating students with autism spectrum
2 disorders with accuracy and fidelity will help provide
3 for best possible outcomes not only for students with
4 autism, but also for other students in the classroom.

5 (13) Children with autism in highly transient
6 families, such as the military (where the rate of chil-
7 dren on the spectrum is even higher) and foreign
8 service families, often face additional challenges in
9 the public education system because of frequent
10 changes in the family's geographic duty station or a
11 parent's deployment, which can interrupt the provi-
12 sion of appropriate interventions and continuity of
13 effective educational methods.

14 (14) In school districts that have a large popu-
15 lation of transient families or that border military
16 bases it is especially important to have staff who are
17 highly trained to provide effective services and build
18 a proven track record of academic achievement in
19 serving students with autism.

20 **SEC. 3. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

21 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT PROGRAM.—The
22 Secretary is authorized to carry out a demonstration grant
23 program to award grants to eligible entities to enable such
24 entities to accomplish the purposes described in subsection
25 (b).

1 (b) PURPOSES.—A grant provided under this section
2 shall be used for the following purposes within schools pro-
3 viding education to children in grades pre-kindergarten
4 through 12:

5 (1) Providing evidence-based, in-service training
6 to teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff on ef-
7 fective ways to teach, communicate, recognize, sup-
8 port, and interact with children with autism spec-
9 trum disorder in the classroom and related school
10 settings. Training on providing effective support in-
11 cludes but is not limited to academic support, behav-
12 ioral support, communication support, social emo-
13 tional support, and facilitating positive peer inter-
14 actions and social skills.

15 (2) Providing technical assistance consisting of
16 consultation on the type of training needed, hands-
17 on opportunities to practice and perform newly ac-
18 quired skills and methodologies with fidelity, and
19 post-training support to ensure accuracy of imple-
20 mentation in the classroom.

21 (3) Executing strategies for recruiting and re-
22 taining skilled personnel participating in the edu-
23 cation of children with autism spectrum disorders.

1 (4) Implementing a program of parental sup-
2 port and involvement in the education of students
3 with autism spectrum disorders.

4 (c) DURATION OF GRANTS.—A grant provided under
5 this section shall be—

6 (1) for a period of not more than 5 years, of
7 which not more than the first 2 years shall be used
8 for planning; and

9 (2) subject to annual approval by the Secretary
10 and subject to the availability of appropriations for
11 the fiscal year involved.

12 (d) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—An el-
13 igible entity may use not more than 20 percent of the
14 funds received under this section for the administrative
15 costs of carrying out its responsibilities under this section.

16 (e) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant
17 under this section, an eligible entity shall submit an appli-
18 cation to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and
19 containing such information as the Secretary may require.

20 (f) REPORT.—The Secretary shall conduct an evalua-
21 tion of the demonstration program authorized by this sec-
22 tion and, not later than 1 year after the date of the com-
23 pletion of the demonstration program, shall prepare and
24 submit to the President and the Congress a report on such

1 evaluation, together with recommendations for dissemina-
2 tion and replication of the results of the program.

3 (g) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

4 (1) The term “autism spectrum disorders
5 (ASDs)” refers to complex disorders of brain devel-
6 opment that can affect individuals with varying de-
7 grees from mild to severe, and is characterized by a
8 combination of restricted repetitive and stereotyped
9 behaviors, interests and activities; qualitative impair-
10 ments in social interactions; and qualitative impair-
11 ments in verbal and nonverbal communication.

12 (2) The term “eligible entity” means an eligible
13 local educational agency, or a consortia of such
14 agencies, in partnership with—

15 (A) one or more institutions of higher edu-
16 cation; or

17 (B) one or more nonprofit educational en-
18 tities with documented expertise in working
19 with children with autism.

20 (3) The term “eligible local educational agency”
21 means a local educational agency that has no less
22 than 10 percent of its special education population
23 identified with autism spectrum disorders, including,
24 but not limited to, high functioning autism,
25 Asperger syndrome, and PDD–NOS, and have docu-

1 mented a growth pattern in the number of these stu-
2 dents.

3 (4) The term “institution of higher education”
4 has the meaning given such term in section 102 of
5 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
6 1002).

7 (5) The term “local educational agency” has
8 the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the
9 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
10 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

11 (6) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary
12 of Education.

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