

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5862

To establish a grant program to assist local educational agencies in improving student retention and engagement and providing resources and support to families of at-risk children, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 14, 2016

Mr. MCNERNEY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To establish a grant program to assist local educational agencies in improving student retention and engagement and providing resources and support to families of at-risk children, and for other purposes.

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 “Keep Students in
5 School Act of 2016”.

6 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education
2 shall establish a program under which grants are
3 awarded to local educational agencies to enable the
4 local educational agencies to carry out the activities
5 under subsection (c).

6 (2) DURATION AND RENEWAL.—A grant under
7 this section shall be awarded for a period of 5 years
8 and may not be renewed.

9 (b) APPLICATION.—A local educational agency desir-
10 ing a grant under this section shall submit an application
11 to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and con-
12 taining such information as the Secretary may reasonably
13 require.

14 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—A local educational agency that
15 receives a grant under this section may only use the grant
16 funds to carry out one or more of the following:

17 (1) ATTENDANCE PROGRAM.—Establish an at-
18 tendance program that enables—

19 (A) each elementary school and secondary
20 school served by the local educational agency to
21 collect and maintain attendance records elec-
22 tronically;

23 (B) each such school to share the data col-
24 lected under subparagraph (A) with the local
25 educational agency and other elementary

1 schools and secondary schools served by the
2 local educational agency; and

3 (C) the local educational agency to use the
4 data collected under subparagraph (A) to in-
5 form attendance intervention strategies.

6 (2) AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND REC-
7 REATIONAL ACTIVITIES.—Improve student engage-
8 ment by funding after-school programs and rec-
9 reational activities.

10 (3) TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
11 PROGRAM.—Establish a teacher training and devel-
12 opment program that focuses on issues relating to
13 racial inequality and poverty.

14 (4) STUDENT RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT
15 POLICY.—In the case of a local educational agency
16 that has a zero tolerance policy, making such policy
17 more compatible with the goals of student retention
18 and engagement.

19 (5) STUDENT ABSENCE POLICY.—Establish a
20 policy that requires each elementary school and sec-
21 ondary school served by the local educational agen-
22 cy—

23 (A) to make personal phone calls to the
24 parents of an at-risk child the same day that
25 such child's absence is noted; and

1 (B) when needed, and if possible, to pro-
2 vide parents of at-risk children with an inter-
3 preter and a translation of written communica-
4 tions.

5 (6) YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION.—Collabo-
6 rate with local agencies and social workers that
7 focus on youth violence prevention to address issues
8 facing at-risk children.

9 (7) RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS
10 OF AT-RISK CHILDREN.—Provide parents of at-risk
11 children with resources and support, including—

12 (A) providing school counseling services for
13 parents and their at-risk children; and

14 (B) collaborating with other organizations
15 in the community to facilitate access to re-
16 sources and support, including fulfilling any
17 needs with respect to at-risk children created by
18 budget deficits.

19 (8) MENTORING PROGRAM.—Establish or ex-
20 pand a mentoring program under which—

21 (A) a community volunteer who—

22 (i) attends a secondary school is
23 paired with an at-risk child who attends an
24 elementary school; or

1 (ii) has obtained at least a high school
2 diploma, or its equivalent, is paired with
3 an at-risk child who attends either an ele-
4 mentary school or a secondary school; and
5 (B) such community volunteer meets with
6 the at-risk child for at least 5 hours each week
7 that school is in session to provide homework
8 assistance and encourage attendance.

9 (9) LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKERS.—
10 Provide at least one licensed social worker for ele-
11 mentary schools and one licensed social worker for
12 high schools served by the local educational agency.

13 **SEC. 3. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

14 The Secretary shall provide technical assistance,
15 upon request, to local educational agencies receiving a
16 grant under section 2 to implement the goals of such sec-
17 tion.

18 **SEC. 4. TASK FORCE ON ADDRESSING HARDSHIPS OF DIS-**
19 **ADVANTAGED YOUTH.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than December 31,
21 2017, the Secretary shall enter a memorandum of under-
22 standing with other appropriate heads of Federal agencies
23 regarding the establishment of a task force to develop a
24 comprehensive work plan to address the hardships that
25 disadvantaged youth may face in attending elementary

1 school and secondary school and attaining academic suc-
2 cess, including the following:

3 (1) HOME ENVIRONMENT FACTORS.—Hard-
4 ships within the home, including domestic violence
5 and drug or alcohol abuse in the home.

6 (2) ECONOMIC FACTORS.—Economic hardships,
7 including poverty, single-parent homes, frequent
8 housing mobility, parents who work multiple jobs,
9 lack of adequate transportation to school, lack of af-
10 fordable childcare, and working students.

11 (3) SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS.—Hard-
12 ships within the academic environment, including
13 overcrowded classrooms, discriminatory attitudes of
14 teachers and administrators, hostility from other
15 students, lack of flexibility regarding the cultural or
16 learning needs of the student, and inconsistent pro-
17 cedures for dealing with truancy.

18 (4) PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS FACTORS.—
19 Personal hardships, including learning difficulties,
20 drug and alcohol abuse and mental health issues.

21 (b) DUTIES.—The task force shall—

22 (1) coordinate interagency efforts to address
23 the hardships described in subsection (a);

24 (2) assess the effectiveness of Federal programs
25 aimed at addressing such hardships;

1 (3) develop a comprehensive work plan that
2 identifies and implements improvements to the Fed-
3 eral programs assessed under paragraph (2) by—

4 (A) eliminating ineffective programs;

5 (B) redirecting resources; and

6 (C) consolidating the efforts of successful
7 programs; and

8 (4) incorporate positive youth development
9 practices into the work plan developed under para-
10 graph (3).

11 (c) REPORTS.—

12 (1) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—Not later than 3
13 years after the date on which the task force is estab-
14 lished under this section, the task force shall submit
15 to the appropriate committees of Congress a prelimi-
16 nary report that shall include—

17 (A) the assessment conducted under sub-
18 section (b)(2); and

19 (B) the work plan developed under sub-
20 section (b)(3).

21 (2) PROGRESS REPORT.—Not later than 3
22 years after the date on which the task force submits
23 the preliminary report under paragraph (1), the task
24 force shall submit to the appropriate committees of
25 Congress a report regarding the progress and effec-

1 tiveness of implementing the work plan developed
2 under subsection (b)(3).

3 (3) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 3 years
4 after the date on which the task force submits the
5 progress report under paragraph (2), the task force
6 shall submit to the appropriate committees of Con-
7 gress a final report including—

8 (A) the results of implementing the work
9 plan developed under subsection (b)(3); and

10 (B) recommendations on the practices that
11 individual elementary schools and secondary
12 schools should implement to further remove the
13 hardships that disadvantaged youth may face.

14 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

15 There are authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000
16 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2028 to carry out
17 this Act.

18 **SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.**

19 For purposes of this Act:

20 (1) AT-RISK CHILDREN.—The term “at-risk
21 children” includes elementary school and secondary
22 school students who—

23 (A) are subject to grade retention;

24 (B) have poor academic performance;

25 (C) have a high rate of absenteeism;

1 (D) have behavioral problems; or

2 (E) are subject to frequent housing mobil-
3 ity.

4 (2) COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER.—The term “com-
5 munity volunteer” means an individual who volun-
6 tarily offers to mentor an elementary school or sec-
7 ondary school student, without compensation, and—

8 (A) has passed a background check con-
9 ducted in accordance with procedures estab-
10 lished by the Secretary and with applicable
11 State and local laws; or

12 (B) in the event that the individual has
13 failed the background check conducted under
14 subparagraph (A)—

15 (i) has maintained a record free of
16 criminal infractions for the 5 most recent
17 calendar years;

18 (ii) has provided at least 2 character
19 references;

20 (iii) has had no history of violence
21 against children or animals;

22 (iv) has passed a drug test; and

23 (v) has been approved for purposes of
24 the mentoring program under section
25 2(c)(8) by the local police department.

1 (3) DISADVANTAGED YOUTH.—The term “dis-
2 advantaged youth” includes at-risk children and ele-
3 mentary school and secondary school students—

4 (A) whose family receives assistance under
5 the program of block grants to States for tem-
6 porary assistance for needy families established
7 under part A of title IV of the Social Security
8 Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);

9 (B) whose family has an income below the
10 poverty line (as defined by the Office of Man-
11 agement and Budget, and revised annually in
12 accordance with section 673(2) of the Commu-
13 nity Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C.
14 9902(2))) applicable to a family of the size in-
15 volved; or

16 (C) who have a history of trauma or abuse,
17 including substance abuse, in the home.

18 (4) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “local edu-
19 cational agency”, “parent”, “elementary school”,
20 “secondary school”, and “Secretary” have the mean-
21 ings given the terms in section 8101 of the Elemen-
22 tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
23 U.S.C. 7801).

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