

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 3769

To establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Program.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 18, 2018

Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. YOUNG) introduced the following bill;  
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Edu-  
cation, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment  
Program.

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 “Early Pell Promise  
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT PRO-**  
7 **GRAM.**

8 Subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Edu-  
9 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a et seq.) is amended  
10 by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 401B. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT**  
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 “(a) PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—The Secretary is au-  
4 thorized to carry out an Early Federal Pell Grant Com-  
5 mitment Program (referred to in this section as the ‘Pro-  
6 gram’) under which the Secretary shall—

7 “(1) award grants to State educational agencies  
8 to pay the administrative expenses incurred in par-  
9 ticipating in the Program; and

10 “(2) make a commitment to award Federal Pell  
11 Grants to eligible students in accordance with this  
12 section.

13 “(b) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Program shall  
14 meet the following requirements:

15 “(1) ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A student shall be eli-  
17 gible to receive a commitment from the Sec-  
18 retary to receive a Federal Pell Grant early in  
19 the student’s academic career if the student—

20 “(i) is in 8th grade; and

21 “(ii) is eligible for a free or reduced  
22 price lunch under the Richard B. Russell  
23 National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.  
24 1751 et seq.).

25 “(2) FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT.—

1           “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
2           subparagraph (B), each eligible student who  
3           participates in the Program shall receive a com-  
4           mitment from the Secretary to receive a Fed-  
5           eral Pell Grant during the first 2 academic  
6           years that the student is in attendance at an in-  
7           stitution of higher education as an under-  
8           graduate student, if the student—

9                   “(i) applies for Federal financial aid  
10                   (via the FAFSA) during the student’s sen-  
11                   ior year of secondary school and during the  
12                   succeeding academic year; and

13                   “(ii) enrolls at such institution of  
14                   higher education—

15                           “(I) not later than 3 years after  
16                           such student receives a secondary  
17                           school diploma or its recognized equiv-  
18                           alent; or

19                           “(II) if such student becomes a  
20                           member of the Armed Forces, not  
21                           later than 3 years after such student  
22                           is discharged, separated, or released  
23                           from the Armed Forces.

24           “(B) EXCEPTION TO COMMITMENT.—If an  
25           eligible student receives a commitment from the

1 Secretary to receive a Federal Pell Grant dur-  
2 ing the first 2 academic years that the student  
3 is in attendance at an institution of higher edu-  
4 cation as an undergraduate student and the  
5 student applies for Federal financial aid (via  
6 the FAFSA) during the student's senior year of  
7 secondary school or during the succeeding aca-  
8 demic year, and the expected family contribu-  
9 tion of the student for either of such years is  
10 more than 2 times the threshold amount for  
11 Federal Pell Grant eligibility for such year,  
12 then such student shall not receive a Federal  
13 Pell Grant under this section for the succeeding  
14 academic year. Such student shall continue to  
15 be eligible for any other Federal student finan-  
16 cial aid for which the student is otherwise eligi-  
17 ble.

18 “(3) APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL PELL GRANT  
19 REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements of section 401  
20 shall apply to Federal Pell Grants awarded pursuant  
21 to this section, except that with respect to each eligi-  
22 ble student who participates in the Program and is  
23 not subject to the exception under paragraph (2)(B),  
24 the amount of each such eligible student's Federal  
25 Pell Grant only shall be calculated by deeming such

1 student to have an expected family contribution  
2 equal to zero.

3 “(c) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY APPLICA-  
4 TIONS.—

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational  
6 agency desiring to participate in the Program shall  
7 submit an application to the Secretary at such time  
8 and in such manner as the Secretary may require.

9 “(2) CONTENTS.—Each application shall in-  
10 clude—

11 “(A) a description of the proposed targeted  
12 information campaign for the Program and a  
13 copy of the plan described in subsection (e)(2);

14 “(B) an assurance that the State edu-  
15 cational agency will fully cooperate with the on-  
16 going evaluation of the Program;

17 “(C) a description of how the State will—

18 “(i) encourage participating students  
19 to enroll in rigorous and challenging cur-  
20 ricula and coursework, in order to reduce  
21 the need for remedial coursework at the  
22 postsecondary level;

23 “(ii) increase the number of partici-  
24 pating students who—

1                   “(I) obtain a secondary school di-  
2                   ploma; and

3                   “(II) complete applications for  
4                   and enroll in a program of postsec-  
5                   ondary education;

6                   “(iii) introduce participating students  
7                   to institutions of higher education, through  
8                   trips and school-based sessions;

9                   “(iv) provide participating students  
10                  with assistance in the admissions and ap-  
11                  plication process for institutions of higher  
12                  education or other postsecondary education  
13                  programs; and

14                  “(v) ensure that each participating  
15                  student has an educational development  
16                  plan; and

17                  “(D) such other information as the Sec-  
18                  retary may require.

19                  “(3) EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.—In  
20                  this subsection, the term ‘educational development  
21                  plan’ means an individualized plan for a student  
22                  that—

23                         “(A) contains a series of steps to help pro-  
24                         mote the student’s career awareness and explo-  
25                         ration; and

1 “(B) assists students in identifying—

2 “(i) career and technical programs of  
3 study, including—

4 “(I) career and technical pro-  
5 grams of study described in section  
6 122(c)(1)(A) of the Carl D. Perkins  
7 Career and Technical Education Act  
8 of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2342(c)(1)(A));

9 “(II) career pathways (as defined  
10 in section 3 of the Workforce Innova-  
11 tion and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.  
12 3102)); and

13 “(III) providers of training serv-  
14 ices leading to a recognized postsec-  
15 ondary credential that are included on  
16 a State’s list under section 122(d) of  
17 the Workforce Innovation and Oppor-  
18 tunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3152(d)); or

19 “(ii) other postsecondary options, in-  
20 cluding baccalaureate and subbaccalaureate  
21 degree programs.

22 “(d) EVALUATION.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appro-  
24 priated under subsection (f) for a fiscal year, the  
25 Secretary shall reserve not more than \$1,000,000 to

1 award a grant or contract to an organization outside  
2 the Department for an independent evaluation of the  
3 impact of the Program.

4 “(2) COMPETITIVE BASIS.—The grant or con-  
5 tract shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

6 “(3) MATTERS EVALUATED.—The evaluation  
7 described in this subsection shall consider metrics  
8 established by the Secretary that emphasize college  
9 access and success, encouraging low-income students  
10 to pursue higher education, and the cost effective-  
11 ness of the program.

12 “(4) DISSEMINATION.—The findings of the  
13 evaluation shall be widely disseminated to the public  
14 by the organization conducting the evaluation as well  
15 as by the Secretary.

16 “(e) TARGETED INFORMATION CAMPAIGN.—

17 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational  
18 agency receiving a grant under this section shall, in  
19 cooperation with the participating local educational  
20 agencies within the State and the Secretary, develop  
21 a targeted information campaign for the Program.

22 “(2) PLAN.—Each State educational agency re-  
23 ceiving a grant under this section shall include in  
24 the application submitted under subsection (c) a

1 written plan for their proposed targeted information  
 2 campaign. The plan shall include the following:

3 “(A) OUTREACH.—Outreach to students  
 4 and their families, at a minimum, at the begin-  
 5 ning and end of each academic year.

6 “(B) DISTRIBUTION.—How the State edu-  
 7 cational agency plans to provide the outreach  
 8 described in subparagraph (A) and to provide  
 9 the information described in subparagraph (C).

10 “(C) INFORMATION.—The annual provi-  
 11 sion by the State educational agency to all stu-  
 12 dents and families participating in the Program  
 13 of information regarding—

14 “(i) the estimated national and state-  
 15 wide average higher education institution  
 16 cost data for each academic year, which  
 17 cost data shall be disaggregated by—

18 “(I) type of institution, includ-  
 19 ing—

20 “(aa) 2-year public colleges;

21 “(bb) 4-year public colleges;

22 “(cc) 4-year private colleges;

23 and

24 “(dd) private, for-profit col-

25 leges; and

- 1 “(II) component, including—  
2 “(aa) tuition and fees; and  
3 “(bb) room and board;  
4 “(ii) Federal Pell Grants, including—  
5 “(I) the maximum Federal Pell  
6 Grant for each academic year;  
7 “(II) when and how to apply for  
8 a Federal Pell Grant; and  
9 “(III) what the application proc-  
10 ess for a Federal Pell Grant requires;  
11 “(iii) State-specific college savings  
12 programs;  
13 “(iv) State-based financial aid, includ-  
14 ing State-based merit aid;  
15 “(v) Federal financial aid available to  
16 students, including eligibility criteria for  
17 the Federal financial aid and an expla-  
18 nation of the Federal financial aid pro-  
19 grams; and  
20 “(vi) financial aid that may be avail-  
21 able from non-governmental sources.  
22 “(3) ANNUAL INFORMATION.—The information  
23 described in paragraph (2)(C) shall be provided to  
24 eligible students annually for the duration of the  
25 students’ participation in the Program.

1           “(4) RESERVATION.—Each State educational  
2           agency receiving a grant under this section shall re-  
3           serve \$200,000 of the grant funds received each fis-  
4           cal year to carry out the targeted information cam-  
5           paign described in this subsection.

6           “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
7           are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
8           such sums as may be necessary.”.

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