

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 601

To ensure that significantly more students graduate college with the international knowledge and experience essential for success in today's global economy through the establishment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program in the Department of Education.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 9, 2017

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. REED, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. BROWN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To ensure that significantly more students graduate college with the international knowledge and experience essential for success in today's global economy through the establishment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program in the Department of Education.

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 “Senator Paul Simon
5 Study Abroad Program Act of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) To prepare students for success in the mod-
4 ern global economy, opportunities for study abroad
5 should be included as part of a well-rounded edu-
6 cation.

7 (2) Study abroad programs provide students
8 with unparalleled access to international knowledge,
9 an unmatched opportunity to learn foreign lan-
10 guages, and a unique environment for developing
11 cultural understanding, all of which are knowledge
12 and skills needed in today's global economy.

13 (3) Less than 2 percent of all enrolled postsec-
14 ondary students in the United States study abroad
15 for credit in any given year, and minority students,
16 first generation college students, community college
17 students, and students with disabilities are signifi-
18 cantly underrepresented in study abroad participa-
19 tion.

20 (4) Congress authorized the establishment of
21 the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study
22 Abroad Fellowship Program pursuant to section 104
23 of the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets Act,
24 2004 (division H of Public Law 108–199). Pursuant
25 to its mandate, the Lincoln Commission submitted
26 to Congress and the President a report of its rec-

ommendations for greatly expanding the opportunity for students at institutions of higher education in the United States to study abroad, with special emphasis on studying in developing nations.

(5) According to the Lincoln Commission, “[e]xperience shows that leadership from administrators and faculty will drive the number of study abroad participants higher and improve the quality of programs. Such leadership is the only way that study abroad will become an integral part of the undergraduate experience.”. A competitive grant program is necessary to encourage and support such leadership.

SEC. 3. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to ensure that significantly more students have access to quality study abroad opportunities;

(2) to ensure that the diversity of students studying abroad reflects the diversity of students and institutions of higher education in the United States;

(3) to encourage greater diversity in study abroad destinations by increasing the portion of study abroad that takes place in nontraditional

1 study abroad destinations, especially in developing
2 countries; and

3 (4) to encourage a greater commitment by in-
4 stitutions of higher education to expand study
5 abroad opportunities.

6 **SEC. 4. SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM.**

7 Section 741 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
8 U.S.C. 1138) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (a)—

10 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (12) and
11 (13) as paragraphs (13) and (14), respectively;
12 and

13 (B) by inserting after paragraph (11) the
14 following:

15 “(12) awarding grants under the Senator Paul
16 Simon Study Abroad Program described in sub-
17 section (g);” and

18 (2) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(g) SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PRO-
20 GRAM.—

21 “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

22 “(A) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDU-
23 CATION.—The term ‘institution of higher edu-
24 cation’ has the meaning given the term in sec-
25 tion 101(a).

1 “(B) NATIONAL OF THE UNITED
2 STATES.—The term ‘national of the United
3 States’ means a national of the United States
4 or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent res-
5 idence (as those terms are defined in section
6 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8
7 U.S.C. 1101)).

8 “(C) NONTRADITIONAL STUDY ABROAD
9 DESTINATION.—The term ‘nontraditional study
10 abroad destination’ means a location that is de-
11 termined by the Secretary to be a less common
12 destination for students who study abroad.

13 “(D) STUDENT.—The term ‘student’
14 means a national of the United States who is
15 enrolled at an institution of higher education lo-
16 cated within the United States.

17 “(E) STUDY ABROAD.—The term ‘study
18 abroad’ means an educational program of
19 study, work, research, internship, or combina-
20 tion thereof that is conducted outside the
21 United States and that carries academic credit.

22 “(2) SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD
23 PROGRAM.—

24 “(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is estab-
25 lished in the Department a program to be

1 called the ‘Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad
2 Program’.

3 “(B) OBJECTIVES.—The objectives of the
4 program established under subparagraph (A)
5 are, that not later than 10 years after the date
6 of enactment of the Senator Paul Simon Study
7 Abroad Program Act of 2017—

8 “(i) not less than 1,000,000 under-
9 graduate students will study abroad annu-
10 ally;

11 “(ii) the demographics of study
12 abroad participation will reflect the demo-
13 graphics of the United States under-
14 graduate population by increasing the par-
15 ticipation of underrepresented groups; and

16 “(iii) an increasing portion of study
17 abroad will take place in nontraditional
18 study abroad destinations, with a substan-
19 tial portion of such increases in developing
20 countries.

21 “(C) COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO INSTITU-
22 TIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—In order to ac-
23 complish the objectives set forth in subpara-
24 graph (B), the Secretary shall award grants on
25 a competitive basis to institutions of higher

education, individually or in a consortium,
based on applications by the institutions that—

“(i) set forth detailed plans for using
grant funds to further such objectives;

“(ii) include an institutional commit-
ment to expanding access to study abroad;

“(iii) include plans for evaluating
progress made in increasing access to
study abroad;

“(iv) describe how increases in study
abroad participation achieved through the
grant will be sustained in subsequent
years; and

“(v) demonstrate that the programs
have established health and safety guide-
lines and procedures.

“(D) NONGOVERNMENTAL INSTITU-
TIONS.—Consortia of institutions of higher edu-
cation applying for grants described in subpara-
graph (C) may include nongovernmental institu-
tions that provide and promote study abroad
opportunities for students.

“(E) COMMISSION ON THE ABRAHAM LIN-
COLN STUDY ABROAD FELLOWSHIP PRO-
GRAM.—In administering the program, the Sec-

retary shall take fully into account the recommendations of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, established pursuant to section 104 of the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets Act, 2004 (division H of Public Law 108–199).

“(F) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary shall consult with representatives of diverse institutions of higher education, educational policy organizations, and others with appropriate expertise.

“(3) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than December 31 of each year following the date of enactment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act of 2017, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives a report on the implementation of this subsection during the prior fiscal year.

“(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018 and each subsequent fiscal year.”.

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