

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8295

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to support educational programs in American civics and history, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. COLE, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to support educational programs in American civics and history, 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 “Educating for Democ-
5 racy Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

7 The purposes of this Act are—

8 (1) to support local educational agencies, ele-
9 mentary schools, and secondary schools in selecting

1 and making available to all students innovative, en-
2 gaging curricula and programs in American civics
3 and history that prepare them to understand Amer-
4 ican Government and engage in American demo-
5 cratic practices as citizens and residents of the
6 United States;

7 (2) to provide resources to institutions of higher
8 education for the purposes of offering effective pro-
9 fessional development opportunities to enable and
10 encourage teachers to deliver instruction that en-
11 gages students in learning American civics and his-
12 tory;

13 (3) to provide resources to nonprofit organiza-
14 tions that have developed, or are developing, pro-
15 grams in civic education that incorporate practices
16 that are proven to be effective in engaging students,
17 and to assist in making such curricula and programs
18 more widely available to schools and students, par-
19 ticularly in rural and inner-city urban areas that
20 have traditionally been underserved by civic learning
21 programs;

22 (4) to provide resources to continue and expand
23 research into practices, methods, and approaches
24 that are effective in instructing elementary and sec-

1 ondary school students in American civics and his-
2 tory; and

3 (5) to encourage participation in the National
4 Assessment of Educational Progress assessments in
5 American civics and history in grades 4, 8, and 12,
6 using a methodology sufficient to provide accurate
7 State-level data on student proficiency in American
8 civics and history disaggregated so as to have statis-
9 tical significance for every State.

10 **SEC. 3. GENERAL PROVISIONS.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made available
12 under section 9 the Secretary of Education is authorized
13 to carry out the civics education grant programs described
14 in sections 4 through 7.

15 (b) APPLICATION.—To be considered for a grant
16 under this Act, an eligible entity shall submit to the Sec-
17 retary of Education an application at such time, in such
18 manner, and containing such information as the Secretary
19 may require.

20 (c) GRANT DURATION.—Each grant under this Act
21 shall be awarded for a period of not less than three years.

22 (d) PRIORITY.—Except as otherwise provided in this
23 Act, the Secretary shall prioritize the award of grants to
24 eligible entities that demonstrate the greatest potential
25 to—

1 (1) improve knowledge and engagement among
2 students traditionally underserved by comprehensive
3 civic education and American history programs, in-
4 cluding rural and inner-city urban students, English
5 language learners, students who have not completed
6 high school, and other such students;

7 (2) close gaps in civic knowledge and achieve-
8 ment among students of different income levels, ra-
9 cial and ethnic groups, and native languages;

10 (3) improve performance on the National As-
11 sessment of Educational Progress assessments in
12 American civics and history among students in
13 grades 4, 8, and 12;

14 (4) integrate evidence-based practices for pro-
15 moting student proficiency and engagement in civics;
16 and

17 (5) provide cost-effective, scalable delivery of
18 programs and services.

19 **SEC. 4. GRANTS TO STATES.**

20 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Edu-
21 cation is authorized to make grants to States, on a com-
22 petitive basis, to support educational programs in Amer-
23 ican civics and history in accordance with this section.

24 (b) GRANT AMOUNT.—The amount of each grant to
25 a State under this section shall be proportional to the

1 amount received by all local educational agencies in the
2 State under part A of title I of the Elementary and Sec-
3 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.)
4 for the previous fiscal year relative to the total such
5 amount received by all local educational agencies in every
6 State that receives a grant under this section.

7 (c) STATE RESERVATION.—A State that receives a
8 grant under this section may reserve not more than five
9 percent of the amount of the grant for—

10 (1) administrative costs of carrying out the
11 State’s responsibilities under this section; and

12 (2) monitoring and evaluating programs and
13 activities supported with the grant.

14 (d) SUBGRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGEN-
15 CIES.—A State that receives a grant under this section
16 shall use not less than 95 percent of the amount of the
17 grant to make subgrants, on a competitive or formula
18 basis, to local educational agencies within the State to as-
19 sist such agencies in carrying out programs to improve
20 the achievement of elementary and secondary school stu-
21 dents in the fields of American civics and history.

22 (e) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—A State shall use
23 a grant under this section only to supplement the level
24 of Federal, State, and local public funds that would, in

1 absence of such grant, be made available for the activities
2 supported by the grant, and not to supplant such funds.

3 (f) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—As part of the ap-
4 plication required under section 3(b), a State shall include
5 a plan describing how the State intends to use the grant
6 under this section. Each State plan shall include, at a min-
7 imum, the following:

8 (1) An explanation of how the State will use the
9 grant to supplement, and not supplant, other public
10 funds provided for educational programs in Amer-
11 ican civics and history.

12 (2) Plans to address civics and history achieve-
13 ment gaps among students of different income lev-
14 els, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and native lan-
15 guages.

16 (3) Plans to improve civics and history achieve-
17 ment among traditionally underserved students, in-
18 cluding rural and urban students and English learn-
19 ers.

20 (4) Plans for making subgrants to local edu-
21 cational agencies as required under subsection (d),
22 including—

23 (A) details of how the State intends to dis-
24 tribute funding to local educational agencies,

1 whether by competition or through a formula-
2 based system;

3 (B) how the State's approach to distrib-
4 uting funds to local educational agencies will
5 take into account requirements of paragraphs
6 (1) through (3);

7 (C) criteria by which local education agen-
8 cies' applications for funding will be evaluated,
9 including how such applications will take into
10 account the requirements of paragraphs (1)
11 through (3);

12 (D) how the State will ensure that local
13 educational agencies will use grant funds to
14 supplement, and not supplant, other public
15 funding for educational programs in American
16 civics and history; and

17 (E) how the State will evaluate and hold
18 local educational agencies accountable for im-
19 proved student knowledge and achievement in
20 American civics and history.

21 (5) An assurance that the State will participate
22 in the National Assessment of Educational Progress
23 assessments in American civics and history in grades
24 4, 8, and 12.

1 (6) In the case of a State applying to renew a
2 grant previously received under this section, an eval-
3 uation of the effectiveness of the activities carried
4 out using the previous grant, which shall be based
5 on the results of the most recent National Assess-
6 ment of Educational Progress assessment in Amer-
7 ican civics and history, to the extent the results of
8 such assessment are available at the time of the
9 State's application.

10 **SEC. 5. GRANTS TO NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.**

11 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Edu-
12 cation is authorized to make grants to qualified nonprofit
13 organizations, on a competitive basis, to assist such orga-
14 nizations in developing or expanding access to evidence-
15 based curricula, instructional models, and other edu-
16 cational programs to enhance student knowledge and
17 achievement in American civics and history in elementary
18 schools and secondary schools.

19 (b) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—As part of the ap-
20 plication required under section 3(b), a qualified nonprofit
21 organization shall include a proposal that demonstrates
22 how the activities proposed to be carried out with the
23 grant under this section will enhance student knowledge
24 and achievement in American civics and history in elemen-
25 tary schools and secondary schools.

1 (c) PRIORITY OF AWARDS.—In awarding grants
2 under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to
3 qualified nonprofit organizations that propose to use the
4 grant to develop or expand access to curricula, instruc-
5 tional models, and other educational programs that—

6 (1) address the learning needs of traditionally
7 underserved students, including rural and inner-city
8 urban students and English learners; and

9 (2) incorporate evidence-based practices to en-
10 hance student learning and engagement in civics and
11 history.

12 **SEC. 6. GRANTS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**

13 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Edu-
14 cation is authorized to make grants to institutions of high-
15 er education, on a competitive basis, to assist such institu-
16 tions in developing and implementing programs to train
17 elementary and secondary school teachers in methods for
18 instructing and engaging students in American civics and
19 history.

20 (b) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—As part of the ap-
21 plication required under section 3(b), an institution of
22 higher education shall include a proposal demonstrating
23 that the institution—

1 (1) has the ability to train elementary and sec-
2 ondary school teachers to provide comprehensive
3 civics education;

4 (2) is familiar with research on practices that
5 are proven to contribute to effective instruction in
6 civics and history and will incorporate such research
7 into the training provided to teachers using the
8 grant; and

9 (3) will use the grant to make training in civics
10 education available to elementary and secondary
11 school teachers in the State or geographic region
12 served by the institution.

13 (c) PRIORITY OF AWARDS.—In awarding grants
14 under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to in-
15 stitutions of higher education that propose to use the
16 grant to carry out training programs for teachers that—

17 (1) address the specific needs of teachers work-
18 ing with traditionally underserved students, includ-
19 ing rural and inner-city urban students and English
20 learners; and

21 (2) incorporate evidence-based practices for im-
22 proving the ability of teachers to provide effective in-
23 struction in civics and history.

1 **SEC. 7. RESEARCH GRANTS.**

2 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Edu-
3 cation is authorized to make grants, on a competitive
4 basis, to qualified researchers to research and evaluate—

5 (1) elementary and secondary school students’
6 knowledge of American civics and history; and

7 (2) effective instructional practices and educa-
8 tor professional development in the fields of Amer-
9 ican civics and history.

10 (b) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—As part of the ap-
11 plication required under section 3(b), a qualified re-
12 searcher shall include a description of the project to be
13 funded with the grant under this section. The description
14 of the project shall include a separate section that de-
15 scribes how the project may directly or indirectly affect
16 civics education generally, which may include effects such
17 as—

18 (1) achieving the full participation of women,
19 persons with disabilities, and underrepresented mi-
20 norities in American civics and history education;

21 (2) increasing public civic literacy and civic en-
22 gagement;

23 (3) developing a diverse educator workforce; or

24 (4) other such effects.

25 (c) PRIORITY OF AWARDS.—In awarding grants
26 under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to

1 qualified researchers who propose to carry out activities
2 that will benefit historically underserved communities, in-
3 cluding rural and inner-city urban communities and com-
4 munities of English learners.

5 **SEC. 8. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL**
6 **PROGRESS.**

7 Section 303(b) of the Education Sciences Reform Act
8 of 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9622(b)) is amended—

9 (1) in paragraph (2)—

10 (A) by redesignating subparagraphs (D)
11 through (H) as subparagraphs (E) through (I)
12 respectively;

13 (B) by inserting after subparagraph (C)
14 the following:

15 “(D) conduct a national assessment, using
16 a methodology sufficient to provide accurate,
17 disaggregated, statistically significant State-
18 level data on student proficiency for every
19 State, on student academic achievement in pub-
20 lic and private elementary schools and sec-
21 ondary schools at least once every 2 years, in
22 grades 4, 8, and 12 in civics and history;”; and

23 (C) in subparagraph (E), as so redesign-
24 nated, by striking “history, geography, civics”
25 and inserting “geography”; and

1 (2) in paragraph (3)(A)—

2 (A) in clause (i), by striking “(2)(E)” and
3 inserting “(2)(F)”;

4 (B) by redesignating clauses (iii) and (iv)
5 as clauses (iv) and (v), respectively;

6 (C) by inserting after clause (ii) the fol-
7 lowing:

8 “(iii) shall conduct biennial State aca-
9 demic assessments of student achievement
10 in civics and history in grades 4, 8, and
11 12, as described in paragraph (2)(D)”;

12 (D) in clause (iv), as so redesignated, by
13 striking “(2)(D)” and inserting “(2)(E)”.

14 **SEC. 9. DEFINITIONS.**

15 In this Act:

16 (1) The term “civics”, when used with respect
17 to an educational program, means a program that
18 addresses the following:

19 (A) Acquisition of civic knowledge, includ-
20 ing an understanding of the history, heritage,
21 civic life, and civic institutions of the United
22 States.

23 (B) Acquisition of civic skills, such as the
24 ability to analyze text and determine the reli-
25 ability of sources and an understanding of the

1 ways in which civic institutions operate and how
2 individuals may be involved in civic life.

3 (C) Acquisition of civic dispositions, values
4 such as appreciation for free speech, civil dis-
5 course, and understanding perspectives that dif-
6 fer from one's own as well as a disposition to
7 be civically engaged.

8 (D) Development of civic behaviors, includ-
9 ing civic habits and practices such as voting,
10 serving on juries, engagement in deliberative
11 discussions, volunteering, attending public
12 meetings, and other activities related to civic
13 life.

14 (2) The term “eligible entity” means—

15 (A) with respect to grant program under
16 section 4, a State;

17 (B) with respect to the grant program
18 under section 5, a qualified nonprofit organiza-
19 tion;

20 (C) with respect to the grant program
21 under section 6, an institution of higher edu-
22 cation; and

23 (D) with respect to the grant program
24 under section 7, a qualified researcher.

1 (3) The term “evidence-based practices” means
2 practices proven to contribute to the effectiveness of
3 educational programs in civics, including—

4 (A) innovative and engaging classroom in-
5 struction in American civics, Government, and
6 history;

7 (B) service learning and student civic
8 projects linked to classroom learning;

9 (C) learning through participation in mod-
10 els and simulations of democratic processes and
11 experiential learning;

12 (D) guided classroom discussion of current
13 issues and events;

14 (E) meaningful participation in school gov-
15 ernance; and

16 (F) instruction in media literacy.

17 (4) The term “institution of higher education”
18 has the meaning given that term in section 101 of
19 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
20 1001).

21 (5) The term “National Assessment of Edu-
22 cational Progress” means the National Assessment
23 of Educational Progress carried out under section
24 303(b) of the National Assessment of Educational
25 Progress Authorization Act (20 U.S.C. 9622(b)).

1 (6) The term “qualified nonprofit organization”
2 means an organization that—

3 (A) is described in section 501(c)(3) of the
4 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and which is ex-
5 empt from taxation under section 501(a) of
6 such Code; and

7 (B) has experience developing curricula, in-
8 structional models, and other educational pro-
9 grams for students in elementary schools and
10 secondary schools.

11 (7) The term “qualified researcher” means—

12 (A) a nonprofit organization that has abil-
13 ity and capacity to carry out scientifically valid
14 research; or

15 (B) an individual affiliated with such an
16 organization.

17 (8) The terms “English language learner”, “el-
18 ementary school”, “local educational agency”, “sec-
19 ondary school”, and “State” have the meanings
20 given those terms in section 8101 of the Elementary
21 and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
22 7801).

23 **SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

24 There are authorized to be appropriated for fiscal
25 year 2021 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years—

- 1 (1) \$600,000,000 to carry out section 4;
- 2 (2) \$200,000,000 to carry out section 5;
- 3 (3) \$150,000,000 to carry out section 6; and
- 4 (4) \$50,000,000 to carry out section 7.

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