

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8409

To establish the Department of State Student Internship Program as a paid internship program to provide students with the opportunity to learn about a career in diplomacy and foreign affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 29, 2020

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. McCAUL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish the Department of State Student Internship Program as a paid internship program to provide students with the opportunity to learn about a career in diplomacy and foreign affairs, 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 “Department of State
5 Student Internship Program Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STUDENT INTERNSHIP**
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall es-
4 tablish the Department of State Student Internship Pro-
5 gram (in this section referred to as the “Program”) to
6 offer internship opportunities at the Department of State
7 to eligible students to raise awareness of the essential role
8 of diplomacy in the conduct of United States foreign policy
9 and the realization of United States foreign policy objec-
10 tives.

11 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate in the
12 Program, an applicant shall—

13 (1) be a current student at—

14 (A) an institution of higher education (as
15 such term is defined in section 102 of the High-
16 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)); or

17 (B) an institution of higher education
18 based outside the United States, as determined
19 by the Secretary of State;

20 (2) be able to receive and hold an appropriate
21 security clearance; and

22 (3) satisfy such other criteria as established by
23 the Secretary.

24 (c) SELECTION.—The Secretary of State shall estab-
25 lish selection criteria for students to be admitted into the
26 Program that includes the following:

1 (1) Demonstrable interest in a career in foreign
2 affairs.

3 (2) Academic performance.

4 (3) Such other criteria as determined by the
5 Secretary.

6 (d) OUTREACH.—The Secretary of State shall adver-
7 tise the Program widely, including on the internet,
8 through the Department of State’s Diplomats in Resi-
9 dence program, and through other outreach and recruiting
10 initiatives targeting undergraduate and graduate students.
11 The Secretary shall actively encourage people belonging to
12 traditionally underrepresented groups in terms of racial,
13 ethnic, geographic, gender diversity, and disability status
14 to apply to the Program, including by conducting targeted
15 outreach at minority serving institutions (as such term is
16 described in section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act
17 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a))).

18 (e) COMPENSATION.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Students participating in the
20 Program shall be paid at least—

21 (A) the amount specified in section 6(a)(1)
22 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29
23 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)), or

24 (B) the minimum wage of the jurisdiction
25 in which the internship is located,

1 whichever is greatest.

2 (2) HOUSING ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of
3 State shall provide housing to a student partici-
4 pating in the Program whose permanent address is
5 within the United States if the location of the in-
6 ternship in which such student is participating is
7 outside the United States.

8 (3) TRAVEL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of
9 State shall provide a student participating in the
10 Program whose permanent address is within the
11 United States financial assistance to cover the costs
12 of travel once to and once from the location of the
13 internship in which such student is participating, in-
14 cluding travel by air, train, bus, or other transit as
15 appropriate, if the location of such internship is—

16 (A) more than 100 miles from such stu-
17 dent's permanent address; or

18 (B) outside the United States.

19 (4) ASSISTANCE EXEMPT FROM TAXATION.—
20 For purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986,
21 any amount which (but for this paragraph) would be
22 includible in gross income of the eligible recipient by
23 reason of housing assistance described in paragraph
24 (2) or travel assistance described in paragraph (3)
25 shall be excluded from gross income.

1 (f) WORKING WITH INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDU-
2 CATION.—The Secretary of State is authorized to enter
3 into agreements with institutions of higher education to
4 structure internships to ensure such internships satisfy
5 criteria for academic programs in which participants in
6 such internships are enrolled.

7 (g) TRANSITION PERIOD.—Not later than one year
8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
9 of State shall transition all unpaid internship programs
10 of the Department of State to internship programs that
11 offer compensation, including the Foreign Service Intern-
12 ship Program.

13 (h) REPORTS.—Not later than 18 months after the
14 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State
15 shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
16 House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign
17 Relations of a Senate a report that includes the following:

18 (1) Information regarding the number of stu-
19 dents, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, insti-
20 tution of higher learning, home State, State where
21 each student graduated from high school, and dis-
22 ability status, who applied to the Program, were of-
23 fered a position, and participated.

1 (2) Information on the number of security
2 clearance investigations started and the timeline for
3 completion of such investigations.

4 (3) Information on expenditures on the Pro-
5 gram.

6 (4) Information regarding the Department of
7 State's compliance with subsection (h).

8 (i) VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section may
10 be construed to compel any employee of the Depart-
11 ment of State to participate in the collection of the
12 data or divulge any personal information. Depart-
13 ment employees shall be informed that their partici-
14 pation in the data collection contemplated by this
15 title is voluntary.

16 (2) PRIVACY PROTECTION.—Any data collected
17 under this section shall be subject to the relevant
18 privacy protection statutes and regulations applica-
19 ble to Federal employees.

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