

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2747

To amend title VII of the Public Health Service Act to authorize assistance for increasing workforce diversity in the professions of physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, and speech-language pathology, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

OCTOBER 30, 2019

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend title VII of the Public Health Service Act to authorize assistance for increasing workforce diversity in the professions of physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology, and speech-language pathology, 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 “Allied Health Work-
5 force Diversity Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. INCREASING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY IN THE PRO-**
 2 **FESSIONS OF PHYSICAL THERAPY, OCCUPA-**
 3 **TIONAL THERAPY, AUDIOLOGY, AND SPEECH-**
 4 **LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY.**

5 Title VII of the Public Health Service Act is amend-
 6 ed—

7 (1) by redesignating part G (42 U.S.C. 295j et
 8 seq.) as part H; and

9 (2) by inserting after part F (42 U.S.C. 294n
 10 et seq.) the following new part:

11 **“PART G—INCREASING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY**
 12 **IN THE PROFESSIONS OF PHYSICAL THER-**
 13 **APY, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, AUDIOLOGY,**
 14 **AND SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY**

15 **“SEC. 783. SCHOLARSHIPS AND STIPENDS.**

16 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may award grants
 17 and contracts to eligible entities to increase educational
 18 opportunities in the professions of physical therapy, occu-
 19 pational therapy, audiology, and speech-language pathol-
 20 ogy for eligible individuals by—

21 “(1) providing student scholarships or stipends,
 22 including for—

23 “(A) completion of an accelerated degree
 24 program;

1 “(B) completion of an associate’s, bach-
2 elor’s, master’s, or doctoral degree program;
3 and

4 “(C) entry by a diploma or associate’s de-
5 gree practitioner into a bridge or degree com-
6 pletion program;

7 “(2) providing assistance for completion of pre-
8 requisite courses or other preparation necessary for
9 acceptance for enrollment in the eligible entity; and

10 “(3) carrying out activities to increase the re-
11 tention of students in one or more programs in the
12 professions of physical therapy, occupational ther-
13 apy, audiology, and speech-language pathology.

14 “(b) CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.—In
15 carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall take into
16 consideration the recommendations of national organiza-
17 tions representing the professions of physical therapy, oc-
18 cupational therapy, audiology, and speech-language pa-
19 thology, including the American Physical Therapy Asso-
20 ciation, the American Occupational Therapy Association,
21 the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the
22 American Academy of Audiology, and the Academy of
23 Doctors of Audiology.

24 “(c) REQUIRED INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS FOR
25 AWARD RECIPIENTS.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may require
2 recipients of awards under this section to report to
3 the Secretary concerning the annual admission, re-
4 tention, and graduation rates for eligible individuals
5 in programs of the recipient leading to a degree in
6 any of the professions of physical therapy, occupa-
7 tional therapy, audiology, and speech-language pa-
8 thology.

9 “(2) FALLING RATES.—If any of the rates re-
10 ported by a recipient under paragraph (1) fall below
11 the average for such recipient over the two years
12 preceding the year covered by the report, the recipi-
13 ent shall provide the Secretary with plans for imme-
14 diately improving such rates.

15 “(3) INELIGIBILITY.—A recipient described in
16 paragraph (2) shall be ineligible for continued fund-
17 ing under this section if the plan of the recipient
18 fails to improve the rates within the 1-year period
19 beginning on the date such plan is implemented.

20 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 “(1) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The term ‘eligible
22 entity’ means an education program that—

23 “(A) is accredited by—

24 “(i) the Council on Academic Accredi-
25 tation in Audiology and Speech-Language

1 Pathology or the Accreditation Commission
2 for Audiology Education;

3 “(ii) the Commission on Accreditation
4 in Physical Therapy Education; or

5 “(iii) the Accreditation Council for
6 Occupational Therapy Education; and

7 “(B) is carrying out a program for recruit-
8 ing and retaining students underrepresented in
9 the professions of physical therapy, occupa-
10 tional therapy, audiology, and speech-language
11 pathology (including racial or ethnic minorities,
12 or students from disadvantaged backgrounds).

13 “(2) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term ‘eligible
14 individual’ means an individual who—

15 “(A) is a member of a class of persons who
16 are underrepresented in the professions of phys-
17 ical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology,
18 and speech-language pathology (including indi-
19 viduals who are racial or ethnic minorities, indi-
20 viduals from disadvantaged backgrounds, or in-
21 dividuals with a disability (as defined in section
22 3(1) of the Americans with Disabilities Act of
23 1990, or who have an individualized education
24 program, as defined in section 602 of the Indi-
25 viduals with Disabilities Education Act, are cov-

1 ered under section 504 of the Rehabilitation
2 Act of 1973, or have other documentation es-
3 tablishing the student’s disability (as such term
4 is defined in section 3 of the Americans with
5 Disabilities Act of 1990));

6 “(B) has a financial need for a scholarship
7 or stipend; and

8 “(C) is enrolled (or accepted for enroll-
9 ment) at an audiology, speech-language pathol-
10 ogy, physical therapy, or occupational therapy
11 program as a full-time student at an eligible en-
12 tity.

13 “(e) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds awarded
14 under this section shall be used to supplement, and not
15 supplant, other funds available to carry out the activities
16 described in this section.

17 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
18 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
19 \$5,000,000 for the first fiscal year commencing after the
20 date of enactment of the Allied Health Workforce Diver-
21 sity Act of 2019 and each of the 4 succeeding fiscal
22 years.”.

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