

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3953

To require pilot programs in connection with Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps units at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and minority institutions, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 11, 2020

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. CARPER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To require pilot programs in connection with Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps units at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and minority institutions, 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 “Fostering Leadership
5 and Inclusion by Growing HBCU Training Act of 2020”
6 or the “FLIGHT Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) The Fiscal Year 2018 Population Represen-
2 tation in the Military Services report found that
3 while minorities comprise 38 percent of the national
4 population, they comprise only 23 percent of the ac-
5 tive component commissioned officer corps.

6 (2) The Fiscal Year 2018 Population Represen-
7 tation in the Military Services report further found
8 that African Americans only comprised 8 percent of
9 the active component commissioned officer corps,
10 while more than 12 percent of the general popu-
11 lation is African American.

12 (3) The Fiscal Year 2018 Population Represen-
13 tation in the Military Services report further found
14 that African American and Hispanic cadets were re-
15 cipients of a Reserve Officers' Training Corps
16 (ROTC) scholarship at a rate of half of their rep-
17 resentation in the general population.

18 (4) A 2018 RAND study titled "Understanding
19 Demographic Differences in Undergraduate Pilot
20 Training Attrition" found that "[candidates for pilot
21 training from Reserve Officers' Training Corps pro-
22 gram] with more hours of flying experience were also
23 less likely to be eliminated from Initial Flight Train-
24 ing and Primary Pilot Training".

1 (5) In 2020, Air Education and Training Com-
 2 mand, in partnership with the University of Texas-
 3 San Antonio, conducted a study that reinforced, in-
 4 cluding within the Pilot Candidate Selection Method,
 5 the number of flight hours a candidate accumulates
 6 before attending undergraduate pilot training.

7 (6) The United States Air Force has acknowl-
 8 edged that “flight hours . . . can be difficult to ob-
 9 tain for potential candidates depending on their
 10 socio-economic background”.

11 **SEC. 3. PILOT PROGRAMS IN CONNECTION WITH SROTC**
 12 **UNITS AND CSPI PROGRAMS AT HISTORI-**
 13 **CALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**
 14 **AND MINORITY INSTITUTIONS.**

15 (a) PILOT PROGRAMS REQUIRED.—The Secretary of
 16 Defense shall carry out two pilot programs as follows:

17 (1) A pilot program, with elements as provided
 18 for in subsection (c), at covered institutions in order
 19 to assess the feasibility and advisability of mecha-
 20 nisms to reduce barriers to participation in the Sen-
 21 ior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps at such institu-
 22 tions by creating partnerships between satellite or
 23 extension Senior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps
 24 units at such institutions and military installations.

1 (2) In consultation with the Secretary of Home-
 2 land Security, a pilot program, with elements as pro-
 3 vided for in subsection (d), in order to assess the
 4 feasibility and advisability of the provision of finan-
 5 cial assistance to members of the Senior Reserve Of-
 6 ficers' Training Corps, and members of the Coast
 7 Guard College Student Pre-Commissioning Initia-
 8 tive, at covered institutions for participation in flight
 9 training.

10 (b) DURATION.—The duration of each pilot program
 11 under subsection (a) may not exceed five years.

12 (c) PILOT PROGRAM ON PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN
 13 SATELLITE OR EXTENSION SROTC UNITS AND MILITARY
 14 INSTALLATIONS.—

15 (1) PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS.—The Sec-
 16 retary of Defense shall carry out the pilot program
 17 required by subsection (a)(1) at not fewer than five
 18 covered institutions selected by the Secretary for
 19 purposes of the pilot program.

20 (2) REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTION.—Each
 21 covered institution selected by the Secretary for pur-
 22 poses of the pilot program under subsection (a)(1)
 23 shall—

24 (A) currently maintain a satellite or exten-
 25 sion Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps

1 unit under chapter 103 of title 10, United
2 States Code, that is located more than 20 miles
3 from the host unit of such unit; or

4 (B) establish and maintain a satellite or
5 extension Senior Reserve Officers' Training
6 Corps unit that meets the requirements in sub-
7 paragraph (A).

8 (3) PREFERENCE IN SELECTION OF INSTITU-
9 TIONS.—In selecting covered institutions under this
10 subsection for participation in the pilot program
11 under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall give
12 preference to covered institutions that are located
13 within 20 miles of a military installation of the same
14 Armed Force as the host unit of the Senior Reserve
15 Officers' Training Corps of the covered institution
16 concerned.

17 (4) PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES.—The activities
18 conducted under the pilot program under subsection
19 (a)(1) between a satellite or extension Senior Re-
20 serve Officers' Training Corps unit and the military
21 installation concerned shall include such activities
22 designed to reduce barriers to participation in the
23 Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps at the cov-
24 ered institution concerned as the Secretary considers
25 appropriate, including measures to mitigate travel

1 time and expenses in connection with receipt of Sen-
2 ior Reserve Officers' Training Corps instruction.

3 (d) PILOT PROGRAM ON FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR
4 SROTC AND CSPI MEMBERS FOR FLIGHT TRAINING.—

5 (1) ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION BY SROTC
6 AND CSPI MEMBERS.—A member of a Senior Re-
7 serve Officers' Training Corps unit, or a member of
8 a Coast Guard College Student Pre-Commissioning
9 Initiative program, at a covered institution may par-
10 ticipate in the pilot program under subsection (a)(2)
11 if the member meets such academic requirements at
12 the covered institution, and such other requirements,
13 as the Secretary shall establish for purposes of the
14 pilot program.

15 (2) PREFERENCE IN SELECTION OF PARTICI-
16 PANTS.—In selecting members under this subsection
17 for participation in the pilot program under sub-
18 section (a)(2), the Secretary shall give a preference
19 to members who will pursue flight training under the
20 pilot program at a covered institution.

21 (3) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR FLIGHT TRAIN-
22 ING.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
24 provide any member of a Senior Reserve Offi-
25 cers' Training Corps unit or a College Student

1 Pre-Commissioning Initiative program who par-
2 ticipates in the pilot program under subsection
3 (a)(2) financial assistance to defray, whether in
4 whole or in part, the charges and fees imposed
5 on the member for flight training.

6 (B) FLIGHT TRAINING.—Financial assist-
7 ance may be used under subparagraph (A) for
8 a course of flight training only if the course
9 meets Federal Aviation Administration stand-
10 ards and is approved by the Federal Aviation
11 Administration and the applicable State approv-
12 ing agency.

13 (C) USE.—Financial assistance received by
14 a member under subparagraph (A) may be used
15 only to defray the charges and fees imposed on
16 the member as described in that subparagraph.

17 (D) CESSATION OF ELIGIBILITY.—Finan-
18 cial assistance may not be provided to a mem-
19 ber under subparagraph (A) as follows:

20 (i) If the member ceases to meet the
21 academic and other requirements estab-
22 lished pursuant to paragraph (1).

23 (ii) If the member ceases to be a
24 member of the Senior Reserve Officers'
25 Training Corps or the College Student

1 Pre-Commissioning Initiative, as applica-
2 ble.

3 (e) EVALUATION METRICS.—The Secretary of De-
4 fense shall establish metrics to evaluate the effectiveness
5 of the pilot programs under subsection (a).

6 (f) REPORTS.—

7 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days
8 after the commencement of the pilot programs under
9 subsection (a), the Secretary of Defense shall submit
10 to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate
11 and the House of Representatives a report on the
12 pilot programs. The report shall include the fol-
13 lowing:

14 (A) A description of each pilot program,
15 including in the case of the pilot program under
16 subsection (a)(2) the requirements established
17 pursuant to subsection (d)(1).

18 (B) The evaluation metrics established
19 under subsection (e).

20 (C) Such other matters relating to the
21 pilot programs as the Secretary considers ap-
22 propriate.

23 (2) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days
24 after the end of each fiscal year in which the Sec-
25 retary carries out the pilot programs, the Secretary

1 shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services
2 of the Senate and the House of Representatives a
3 report on the pilot programs during such fiscal year.
4 Each report shall include, for the fiscal year covered
5 by such report, the following:

6 (A) In the case of the pilot program re-
7 quired by subsection (a)(1), a description of the
8 partnerships between satellite or extension Sen-
9 ior Reserve Officers' Training Corps units and
10 military installations under the pilot program.

11 (B) In the case of the pilot program re-
12 quired by subsection (a)(2), the following:

13 (i) The number of members of Senior
14 Reserve Officers' Training Corps units,
15 and the number of members of Coast
16 Guard College Student Pre-Commissioning
17 Initiative programs, at covered institutions
18 selected for purposes of the pilot program,
19 including the number of such members
20 participating in the pilot program.

21 (ii) The number of recipients of finan-
22 cial assistance provided under the pilot
23 program, including the number who—

24 (I) completed a ground school
25 course of instruction in connection

1 with obtaining a private pilot's certifi-
2 cate;

3 (II) completed flight training,
4 and the type of training, certificate, or
5 both received;

6 (III) were selected for a pilot
7 training slot in the Armed Forces;

8 (IV) initiated pilot training in the
9 Armed Forces; or

10 (V) successfully completed pilot
11 training in the Armed Forces.

12 (iii) The amount of financial assist-
13 ance provided under the pilot program,
14 broken out by covered institution, course of
15 study, and such other measures as the Sec-
16 retary considers appropriate.

17 (C) Data collected in accordance with the
18 evaluation metrics established under subsection
19 (e).

20 (3) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days
21 prior to the completion of the pilot programs, the
22 Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Armed
23 Services of the Senate and the House of Representa-
24 tives a report on the pilot programs. The report
25 shall include the following:

1 (A) A description of the pilot programs.

2 (B) An assessment of the effectiveness of
3 each pilot program.

4 (C) A description of the cost of each pilot
5 program, and an estimate of the cost of making
6 each pilot program permanent.

7 (D) An estimate of the cost of expanding
8 each pilot program throughout all eligible Sen-
9 ior Reserve Officers' Training Corps units and
10 College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative
11 programs.

12 (E) Such recommendations for legislative
13 or administrative action as the Secretary con-
14 siders appropriate in light of the pilot pro-
15 grams, including recommendations for extend-
16 ing or making permanent the authority for each
17 pilot program.

18 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

19 (1) The term “covered institution” has the
20 meaning given that term in section 262(g)(2) of the
21 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year
22 2020 (Public Law 116–92).

23 (2) The term “flight training” means a course
24 of instruction toward obtaining any of the following:

25 (A) A private pilot's certificate.

1 (B) A commercial pilot certificate.

2 (C) A certified flight instructor certificate.

3 (D) A multi-crew pilot's license.

4 (E) A flight instrument rating.

5 (F) Any other certificate, rating, or pilot
6 privilege the Secretary considers appropriate for
7 purposes of this section.

8 (3) The term "military installation" means an
9 installation of the Department of Defense for the
10 regular components of the Armed Forces.

11 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
12 authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be nec-
13 essary to carry out this section.

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