

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4874

To establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. YOUNG) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Edu-
cation, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment
Program.

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 “Early Pell Promise
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT PRO-**
7 **GRAM.**

8 Subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Edu-
9 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a et seq.) is amended
10 by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 401B. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT**
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 “(a) PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—The Secretary is au-
4 thorized to carry out an Early Federal Pell Grant Com-
5 mitment Program (referred to in this section as the ‘Pro-
6 gram’) under which the Secretary shall—

7 “(1) award grants to States to pay the adminis-
8 trative expenses incurred in participating in the Pro-
9 gram; and

10 “(2) make a commitment to award Federal Pell
11 Grants to eligible students in accordance with this
12 section.

13 “(b) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Program shall
14 meet the following requirements:

15 “(1) ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A student shall be eli-
17 gible to receive a commitment from the Sec-
18 retary to receive a Federal Pell Grant early in
19 the student’s academic career if the student—

20 “(i) is in any of grades 8 through 12;
21 and

22 “(ii) is a member of a household re-
23 ceiving assistance under the supplemental
24 nutrition assistance program established
25 under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008
26 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).

1 “(2) FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT.—

2 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
3 subparagraph (B), each eligible student who
4 participates in the Program shall receive a com-
5 mitment from the Secretary to receive a Fed-
6 eral Pell Grant during the first 2 academic
7 years that the student is in attendance at an in-
8 stitution of higher education as an under-
9 graduate student, if the student—

10 “(i) applies for Federal financial aid
11 (via the Free Application for Federal Stu-
12 dent Aid under section 483 (referred to in
13 this section as ‘FAFSA’)) for the award
14 year that the student will be in attendance
15 at an institution of higher education; and

16 “(ii) enrolls at such institution of
17 higher education—

18 “(I) not later than 1 year after
19 such student receives a secondary
20 school diploma or its recognized equiv-
21 alent; or

22 “(II) if such student becomes a
23 member of the Armed Forces, not
24 later than 3 years after such student

1 is discharged, separated, or released
2 from the Armed Forces.

3 “(B) CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY.—

4 “(i) IN GENERAL.—If an eligible stu-
5 dent receives a commitment from the Sec-
6 retary to receive a Federal Pell Grant dur-
7 ing the first 2 academic years that the stu-
8 dent is in attendance at an institution of
9 higher education as an undergraduate stu-
10 dent and the student is not a member of
11 a household receiving assistance under the
12 supplemental nutrition assistance program
13 established under the Food and Nutrition
14 Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) at the
15 time of the FAFSA application described
16 in subparagraph (A)(i), then such student
17 shall not receive a Federal Pell Grant pur-
18 suant to the commitment under this sec-
19 tion for the academic year, unless the stu-
20 dent, at the time of such FAFSA applica-
21 tion, is a member of a household that is el-
22 igible for benefits under—

23 “(I) the supplemental security in-
24 come program under title XVI of the

1 Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1381
2 et seq.);

3 “(II) a State program funded
4 under the temporary assistance for
5 needy families program under part A
6 of title IV of the Social Security Act
7 (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);

8 “(III) the Medicaid program
9 under title XIX of the Social Security
10 Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.); or

11 “(IV) a means-tested Federal
12 benefit program, not described in sub-
13 clause (I), (II), or (III), that is deter-
14 mined appropriate by the Secretary.

15 “(ii) ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER AID.—
16 A student who does not receive a Federal
17 Pell Grant pursuant to the commitment
18 under this section because such student is
19 not a member of a household receiving as-
20 sistance under the supplemental nutrition
21 assistance program established under the
22 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C.
23 2011 et seq.) at the time such student ap-
24 plies for Federal financial aid (via the
25 FAFSA) and the student is not eligible for

1 benefits under a program described in
2 clause (i), shall continue to be eligible for
3 any other Federal student financial aid for
4 which the student is otherwise eligible.

5 “(C) IDENTIFICATION.—The Secretary
6 shall identify for each eligible institution, each
7 eligible student who attends that institution and
8 participates in the Program, including students
9 participating in accordance with subparagraph
10 (B).

11 “(3) APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL PELL GRANT
12 REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements of section 401
13 shall apply to Federal Pell Grants awarded pursuant
14 to this section, except that with respect to each eligi-
15 ble student who participates in the Program, the
16 amount of each such eligible student’s Federal Pell
17 Grant only shall be calculated by deeming such stu-
18 dent to have an expected family contribution or stu-
19 dent aid index, as applicable, equal to zero.

20 “(c) STATE APPLICATIONS.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State desiring to par-
22 ticipate in the Program shall submit an application
23 to the Secretary at such time and in such manner
24 as the Secretary may require.

1 “(2) CONTENTS.—Each application shall in-
2 clude—

3 “(A) a description of the proposed targeted
4 information campaign for the Program and a
5 copy of the plan described in subsection (e)(2);

6 “(B) an assurance that the State will fully
7 cooperate with the ongoing evaluation of the
8 Program;

9 “(C) a description of how the State will—

10 “(i) encourage participating students
11 to enroll in rigorous and challenging cur-
12 ricula and coursework, in order to reduce
13 the need for remedial coursework at the
14 postsecondary level;

15 “(ii) increase the number of partici-
16 pating students who—

17 “(I) obtain a secondary school di-
18 ploma; and

19 “(II) complete applications for
20 and enroll in a program of postsec-
21 ondary education;

22 “(iii) introduce participating students
23 to institutions of higher education, through
24 trips and school-based sessions;

1 “(iv) provide participating students
2 with assistance in the admissions and ap-
3 plication process for institutions of higher
4 education or other postsecondary education
5 programs; and

6 “(v) ensure that each participating
7 student has an educational development
8 plan; and

9 “(D) such other information as the Sec-
10 retary may require.

11 “(3) EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.—In
12 this subsection, the term ‘educational development
13 plan’ means an individualized plan for a student
14 that—

15 “(A) contains a series of steps to help pro-
16 mote the student’s career awareness and explo-
17 ration; and

18 “(B) assists students in identifying—

19 “(i) career and technical education
20 programs or programs of study (as those
21 terms are defined in section 3 of the Carl
22 D. Perkins Career and Technical Edu-
23 cation Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302), as in
24 effect on July 1, 2019); or

1 “(ii) other postsecondary options, in-
2 cluding baccalaureate and subbacca-
3 laureate degree programs.

4 “(d) EVALUATION.—

5 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appro-
6 priated under subsection (f) for a fiscal year, the
7 Secretary shall reserve not less than 2 percent and
8 not more than 5 percent to award a grant or con-
9 tract to an organization outside the Department for
10 an independent evaluation of the impact of the Pro-
11 gram.

12 “(2) COMPETITIVE BASIS.—The grant or con-
13 tract shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

14 “(3) MATTERS EVALUATED.—The evaluation
15 described in this subsection shall consider metrics
16 established by the Secretary that emphasize access
17 to and success in institutions of higher education,
18 encouraging low-income students to pursue higher
19 education, and the cost effectiveness of the program.

20 “(4) DISSEMINATION.—The findings of the
21 evaluation shall be widely disseminated to the public
22 by the organization conducting the evaluation as well
23 as by the Secretary.

24 “(e) TARGETED INFORMATION CAMPAIGN.—

11 “(A) OUTREACH.—Outreach to students
12 and their families, at a minimum, at the begin-
13 ning and end of each academic year.

18 “(C) INFORMATION.—The annual provi-
19 sion by the State to all students and families
20 participating in the Program of information re-
21 garding—

“(i) the estimated national and state-wide average higher education institution cost data for each academic year, which cost data shall be disaggregated by—

1 “(I) type of institution, includ-
2 ing—

3 “(aa) 2-year public institu-
4 tions of higher education;

5 “(bb) 4-year public institu-
6 tions of higher education;

7 “(cc) 4-year private institu-
8 tions of higher education; and

9 “(dd) private, for-profit in-
10 stitutions of higher education;
11 and

12 “(II) component, including—

13 “(aa) tuition and fees; and

14 “(bb) room and board;

15 “(ii) Federal Pell Grants, including—

16 “(I) the maximum Federal Pell
17 Grant for each academic year;

18 “(II) when and how to apply for
19 a Federal Pell Grant; and

20 “(III) what the application proc-
21 ess for a Federal Pell Grant requires;

22 “(iii) State-specific postsecondary edu-
23 cation savings programs;

24 “(iv) State-based financial aid, includ-
25 ing State-based merit aid;

1 “(v) Federal financial aid available to
2 students, including eligibility criteria for
3 the Federal financial aid and an expla-
4 nation of the Federal financial aid pro-
5 grams; and

6 “(vi) financial aid that may be avail-
7 able from non-governmental sources.

8 “(3) ANNUAL INFORMATION.—The information
9 described in paragraph (2)(C) shall be provided to
10 eligible students annually for the duration of the
11 students’ participation in the Program.

12 “(4) RESERVATION.—Each State receiving a
13 grant under this section shall reserve not less than
14 10 percent of the grant funds received each fiscal
15 year to carry out the targeted information campaign
16 described in this subsection.

17 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
18 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
19 such sums as may be necessary.”.