

119<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# S. 3710

To amend the SOAR Act.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 28, 2026

Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

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## A BILL

To amend the SOAR Act.

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 “SOAR Permanent Au-  
5 thorization Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. GRANT DURATION AND APPLICATIONS.**

7 (a) EXTENSION OF GRANT DURATION.—Section  
8 3004(a)(2) of the Scholarships for Opportunity and Re-  
9 sults Act (sec. 38–1853.04(a)(2), D.C. Official Code) is  
10 amended by striking “5 years” and inserting “5 years, and  
11 may renew such grants for an additional period of not

1 more than 5 years, without a competitive process, when  
 2 the Secretary determines appropriate and desirable to  
 3 maintain continuity in the program”.

4 (b) CHANGES TO APPLICATION CONTENT.—

5 (1) NONINTERFERENCE IN REGULAR ADMIS-  
 6 SIONS STANDARDS OR PROCEDURES.—Section  
 7 3005(b)(1)(C) of such Act (sec. 38-  
 8 1853.05(b)(1)(C), D.C. Official Code) is amended by  
 9 striking the semicolon at the end and inserting “, if  
 10 such a process will not interfere with the regular ad-  
 11 mission standards or procedures of the school;”.

12 (2) CHANGE TO RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT OF  
 13 ELIGIBLE ENTITY BOARD MEMBERS.—

14 (A) IN GENERAL.—Section 3005(b)(1)(M)  
 15 of such Act (sec. 38-1853.05(b)(1)(M), D.C.  
 16 Official Code) is amended by striking “District  
 17 of Columbia” and inserting “Washington met-  
 18 ropolitan region”.

19 (B) WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN REGION  
 20 DEFINED.—Section 3013 of such Act (sec. 38-  
 21 1853.13, D.C. Official Code) is amended by  
 22 adding at the end the following:

23 “(12) WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN REGION.—  
 24 The term ‘Washington metropolitan region’ includes  
 25 the District of Columbia, the counties of Mont-

1 gomery and Prince Georges in Maryland, and the  
 2 counties of Arlington and Fairfax and the cities of  
 3 Alexandria and Falls Church in Virginia.”.

4 **SEC. 3. ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3007(a)(5)(A) of the  
 6 Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act (sec. 38–  
 7 1853.07(a)(5)(A), D.C. Official Code) is amended—

8 (1) by amending clause (i) to read as follows:

9 “(i) in the case of a school that is a  
 10 participating school as of the date of en-  
 11 actment of the SOAR Permanent Author-  
 12 ization Act, is recognized by—

13 “(I) a national or regional ac-  
 14 crediting body; or

15 “(II) an accrediting body sited by  
 16 the Student and Visitor Exchange  
 17 English Language Program adminis-  
 18 tered by U.S. Immigration and Cus-  
 19 toms Enforcement; and”;

20 (2) by amending clause (ii) to read as follows:

21 “(ii) in the case of a school that is not  
 22 a participating school as of the date of en-  
 23 actment of the SOAR Permanent Author-  
 24 ization Act, is fully accredited by an ac-  
 25 crediting body described under clause (i)

1 not later than 5 years after the date on  
2 which that school began the process of  
3 pursuing participation under this divi-  
4 sion.”.

5 (b) REMOVAL OF COMPLETED REPORT.—Section  
6 3007(a)(5) of such Act (sec. 38–1853.07(a)(5), D.C. Offi-  
7 cial Code) is further amended by striking subparagraph  
8 (B) and redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph  
9 (B).

10 **SEC. 4. USE OF FUNDS.**

11 (a) EXTENSION OF FUNDS FOR USE IN PRE-KIN-  
12 DERGARTEN.—Section 3007(a)(3)(B)(i)(I) of the Scholar-  
13 ships for Opportunity and Results Act (sec. 38–  
14 1853.07(a)(3)(B)(i)(I), D.C. Official Code) is amended by  
15 striking “kindergarten” and inserting “pre-kindergarten”.

16 (b) MAXIMUM SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT.—Section  
17 3007(a)(3)(B)(ii) of such Act (sec. 38–  
18 1853.07(a)(3)(B)(ii), D.C. Official Code) is amended by  
19 adding at the end the following: “In any year, an eligible  
20 entity receiving a grant under section 3004(a) has sole  
21 authority to establish a maximum scholarship amount less  
22 than the amount permitted in (3)(B)(i).”.

23 (c) EXTENSION OF FUNDS FOR ADDITIONAL STU-  
24 DENT ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3007 of such Act  
2 (sec. 38–1853.07, D.C. Official Code) is further  
3 amended—

4           (A) in subsection (b)—

5           (i) in the heading, by striking “AND  
6 PARENTAL ASSISTANCE” and inserting “,  
7 PARENTAL ASSISTANCE, AND STUDENT  
8 ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE”; and

9           (ii) by adding at the end the fol-  
10 lowing:

11           “(3) The expenses of providing tutoring service  
12 to participating eligible students who need additional  
13 academic assistance. If there are insufficient funds  
14 to provide tutoring services to all such students in  
15 a year, the eligible entity shall give priority in such  
16 year to students who previously attended an elemen-  
17 tary school or secondary school identified as one of  
18 the lowest-performing schools under the District of  
19 Columbia’s accountability system.”;

20           (B) by striking subsection (e) and redesign-  
21 ating subsection (d) as subsection (e); and

22           (C) in subsection (e), as so redesignated—

23           (i) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking  
24 “subsections (b) and (c)” and inserting  
25 “subsection (b)”; and

1 (ii) in paragraph (3), by striking  
 2 “subsections (b) and (c)” and inserting  
 3 “subsection (b)”.

4 (2) INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF FUNDS.—Section  
 5 3007(b) of such Act (sec. 38–1853.07(b), D.C. Offi-  
 6 cial Code) is further amended in the matter pre-  
 7 ceding paragraph (1), by striking “\$2,000,000” and  
 8 inserting “\$2,200,000”.

9 (3) REMOVAL OF COMPLETED STUDY.—Section  
 10 3007(b)(1) of such Act (sec. 38–1853.07(b)(1), D.C.  
 11 Official Code) is further amended—

12 (A) in subparagraph (E), by striking “;  
 13 and” and inserting a period; and

14 (B) by striking subparagraph (F).

15 **SEC. 5. STANDARDIZED TESTING REQUIREMENTS.**

16 Section 3008(h) of the Scholarships for Opportunity  
 17 and Results Act (sec. 38–1853.08(h), D.C. Official Code)  
 18 is amended—

19 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “section  
 20 3009(a)(2)(A)(i)” and inserting “section 3009(a)”;

21 (2) by amending paragraph (2) to read as fol-  
 22 lows:

23 “(2) ADMINISTRATION OF TESTS.—The Insti-  
 24 tute of Education Sciences may administer assess-  
 25 ments to students participating in the evaluation

1 under section 3009(a) for the purpose of conducting  
 2 the evaluation under such section.”; and

3 (3) in paragraph (3), by striking “the nation-  
 4 ally norm-referenced standardized test described in  
 5 paragraph (2)” and inserting “a nationally norm-  
 6 referenced standardized test”.

7 **SEC. 6. EVALUATIONS.**

8 (a) **MODIFICATION IN EVALUATION FREQUENCY.—**  
 9 Section 3009(a)(1)(A) of the Scholarships for Opportunity  
 10 and Results Act (sec. 38–1853.09(a)(1)(A), D.C. Official  
 11 Code) is amended to read as follows:

12 “(A) jointly enter into an agreement with  
 13 the Institute of Education Sciences of the De-  
 14 partment of Education to—

15 “(i) conduct an evaluation of the op-  
 16 portunity scholarship program under this  
 17 division; and

18 “(ii) not later than January 1, 2028,  
 19 and every 7 years thereafter, issue a public  
 20 report on the opportunity scholarship pro-  
 21 gram under this division.”.

22 (b) **RESPONSIBILITY OF SECRETARY.—**

23 (1) **ENSURING EVALUATIONS ARE RIGOROUS.—**  
 24 Section 3009(a)(2)(A)(i) of such Act (sec. 38–

1 1853.09(a)(2)(A)(i), D.C. Official Code) is amended  
 2 to read as follows:

3 “(i) is rigorous; and”.

4 (2) ENSURING PROPER INFORMATION IS MADE  
 5 PUBLIC.—Section 3009(a)(2)(B) of such Act (sec.  
 6 38–1853.09(a)(2)(B), D.C. Official Code) is amend-  
 7 ed to read as follows:

8 “(B) disseminate information on the im-  
 9 pact of the program on academic progress and  
 10 educational attainment.”.

11 (c) RESPONSIBILITY OF INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION  
 12 SCIENCES.—

13 (1) EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATING ELIGIBLE  
 14 STUDENTS.—Section 3009(a)(3) of such Act (sec.  
 15 38–1853.09(a)(3), D.C. Official Code) is amended—

16 (A) in subparagraph (A)—

17 (i) by inserting “the academic  
 18 progress of” after “assess”; and

19 (ii) by striking “in each of grades 3”  
 20 and all that follows through the end of the  
 21 subparagraph and inserting “; and”; and

22 (B) by striking subparagraph (B) and re-  
 23 designating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph  
 24 (B).

1           (2)       TECHNICAL        AMENDMENT.—Section  
2       3009(a)(3) of such Act (sec. 38–1853.09(a)(3), D.C.  
3       Official Code) is further amended in the heading, by  
4       striking “ON EDUCATION” and inserting “OF EDU-  
5       CATION”.

6       (d) ISSUES TO BE EVALUATED.—Section 3009(a)(4)  
7       of such Act (sec. 38–1853.09(a)(4), D.C. Official Code)  
8       is amended—

9           (1) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as  
10       follows:

11                   “(A) The academic progress of partici-  
12                   pating eligible students who use an opportunity  
13                   scholarship compared to the academic progress  
14                   of a comparison group of students with similar  
15                   backgrounds, which may include students in the  
16                   District of Columbia public schools and the Dis-  
17                   trict of Columbia public charter schools.”;

18           (2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “increas-  
19       ing the satisfaction of such parents and students  
20       with their choice” and inserting “the satisfaction of  
21       those parents and students with the program”;

22           (3) by amending subparagraph (D) to read as  
23       follows:

24                   “(D) The high school graduation rates,  
25                   college enrollment rates, college persistence

1 rates, and college graduation rates of partici-  
 2 pating eligible students who use an opportunity  
 3 scholarship compared with the rates of public  
 4 school students described in subparagraph (A),  
 5 to the extent practicable.”;

6 (4) by amending subparagraph (E) to read as  
 7 follows:

8 “(E) The safety of the schools attended by  
 9 participating eligible students who use an op-  
 10 portunity scholarship compared with the schools  
 11 attended by public school students described in  
 12 subparagraph (A), to the extent practicable.”;

13 (5) by striking subparagraphs (F) and (G); and

14 (6) by redesignating subparagraph (H) as sub-  
 15 paragraph (F).

16 (e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by  
 17 this section shall apply with respect to evaluations carried  
 18 out on or after the expiration of the 2-year period begin-  
 19 ning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

20 **SEC. 7. REPORT BY ENTITY RECEIVING FUNDS.**

21 (a) CHANGE TO CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Section  
 22 3010 of the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act  
 23 (sec. 38–1853.10, D.C. Official Code) is amended—

24 (1) in subsection (b)(1)—

25 (A) by striking subparagraph (A); and

1 (B) by redesignating subparagraphs (B)  
2 and (C) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respec-  
3 tively; and

4 (2) in subsection (c)(1)—

5 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “ag-  
6 gregate academic achievement of other partici-  
7 pating students at the student’s school in the  
8 same grade or level, as appropriate, and the”;  
9 and

10 (B) by amending subparagraph (B) to read  
11 as follows:

12 “(B) any incidents of school violence, stu-  
13 dent suspensions, and student expulsions; and”.

14 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made this  
15 section shall apply with respect to reports submitted for  
16 school years beginning on or after the date of the enact-  
17 ment of this Act.

18 **SEC. 8. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-**  
19 **TION.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3014 of the Scholarships  
21 for Opportunity and Results Act (sec. 38–1853.14, D.C.  
22 Official Code) is amended—

23 (1) in subsection (a), in the matter preceding  
24 paragraph (1), by striking “\$60,000,000 for fiscal  
25 year 2012 and for each fiscal year through fiscal

1 year 2023” and inserting “\$75,000,000 for fiscal  
2 year 2027 and for each succeeding fiscal year”; and

3 (2) in subsection (b), by striking  
4 “\$60,000,000” and inserting “\$75,000,000”.

5 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by  
6 this section shall apply beginning with respect to fiscal  
7 year 2027.

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