

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

# S. 3783

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to establish a Mental and Behavioral Health Career Promotion Grant Program, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 5, 2026

Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BOOKER, and Mr. MERKLEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to establish a Mental and Behavioral Health Career Promotion Grant Program, 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 “Mental Health Career  
5       Promotion Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CAREER PRO-**  
2 **MOTION GRANT PROGRAM.**

3 Subpart 3 of part B of title V of the Public Health  
4 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290bb–31 et seq.) is amended by  
5 adding at the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 5200. MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CAREER**  
7 **PROMOTION GRANT PROGRAM.**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through  
9 the Assistant Secretary (referred to in this section as the  
10 ‘Secretary’), shall establish a program, to be known as the  
11 ‘Mental and Behavioral Health Career Promotion Grant  
12 Program’, to award grants to eligible entities to establish  
13 or expand eligible mental and behavioral health career pro-  
14 motion programs in schools served by local educational  
15 agencies or in public junior or community colleges.

16 “(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible to receive  
17 a grant under this section, an entity shall be a partnership  
18 that includes—

19 “(1)(A) 1 or more local educational agencies, or  
20 a consortium of such local educational agencies; or

21 “(B) a State educational agency;

22 “(2) 1 or more public junior or community col-  
23 leges, or a consortium of such public junior or com-  
24 munity colleges; and

25 “(3) at least 1—

1           “(A) community-based mental or behav-  
2           ioral health provider (such as a certified com-  
3           munity behavioral health clinic, a community  
4           mental health center, an opioid treatment pro-  
5           gram, or a nonprofit mental health or substance  
6           use professional association); or

7           “(B) other community-based entity, as de-  
8           termined appropriate by the Secretary (such as  
9           a State or local behavioral health authority, a  
10          human service agency, a child welfare agency,  
11          or an institution of higher education, such as a  
12          historically Black college or university).

13          “(c) ELIGIBLE MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
14 CAREER PROMOTION PROGRAMS.—To be eligible for a  
15 grant under this section, a mental and behavioral health  
16 career promotion program shall promote careers in mental  
17 and behavioral health to students in grades 9 through 12  
18 or in public junior or community colleges, such as by—

19           “(1) providing educational presentations to stu-  
20           dents that increase exposure to and knowledge of ca-  
21           reers in the mental and behavioral health field;

22           “(2) coordinating internships and externships  
23           for students who demonstrate an interest in mental  
24           and behavioral health;

1           “(3) providing opportunities for students to  
2 interact with and shadow mental and behavioral  
3 health care professionals;

4           “(4) providing students with mentorships and  
5 experiential learning opportunities; or

6           “(5) partnering with local institutions of higher  
7 education and community behavioral health organi-  
8 zations to promote careers in mental and behavioral  
9 health.

10          “(d) ACTIVITY REQUIREMENT.—A grant awarded  
11 under this section may only be used for activities that are  
12 developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate.

13          “(e) AWARD DURATION; RENEWAL.—A grant award-  
14 ed under this section shall be for a period of 5 years and  
15 may be renewed.

16          “(f) GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY.—The Secretary  
17 shall ensure that grants awarded under this section cover  
18 a diverse range of geographical areas.

19          “(g) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may  
20 provide technical assistance in seeking grants under this  
21 section to high-need local educational agencies and to pub-  
22 lic junior and community colleges.

23          “(h) EVALUATION AND MEASURES OF OUTCOMES.—

24                 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop  
25 a fiscally appropriate process for evaluating activi-

1 ties carried out through grants awarded under this  
2 section. Under such process, the Secretary shall—

3 “(A) provide to recipients of such grants—

4 “(i) guidelines for the submission to  
5 the Secretary of data concerning such ac-  
6 tivities; and

7 “(ii) measures of outcomes to be used  
8 by such recipients in evaluating the effec-  
9 tiveness of such activities (including out-  
10 comes related to the student, family, and  
11 local educational systems supported by  
12 such activities);

13 “(B) require each such recipient to submit  
14 to the Secretary annual reports—

15 “(i) containing data on such activities  
16 carried out by the recipient; and

17 “(ii) that use the measures of out-  
18 comes described in subparagraph (A)(ii) to  
19 evaluate the effectiveness of such activities;  
20 and

21 “(C) not later than 1 year after the date  
22 of enactment of this section, and annually  
23 thereafter, submit to Congress a report describ-  
24 ing the results and effectiveness of the pro-  
25 grams under this section.

1           “(2) LIMITATION.—A recipient of a grant  
2 under this section may not use more than 10 per-  
3 cent of the amounts received for data collection, per-  
4 formance measurement, and performance assess-  
5 ment.

6           “(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7           “(1) CAREER IN MENTAL OR BEHAVIORAL  
8 HEALTH.—The term ‘career in mental or behavioral  
9 health’ means an occupation the primary intent and  
10 function of which is the direct treatment or recovery  
11 support of patients with, or in recovery from, a men-  
12 tal or behavioral health disorder, which may include  
13 an occupation as—

14                   “(A) a physician (including a physician  
15 with a degree of Doctor of Medicine or Doctor  
16 of Osteopathic Medicine);

17                   “(B) an advanced practice registered nurse  
18 practitioner;

19                   “(C) a social worker;

20                   “(D) a marriage or family therapist;

21                   “(E) a counselor (including an addiction-  
22 or mental health-licensed professional);

23                   “(F) a psychologist;

24                   “(G) a psychiatrist (including a child or  
25 adolescent psychiatrist);

1           “(H) a psychiatric aide;

2           “(I) a neurologist;

3           “(J) a peer support specialist;

4           “(K) an addiction specialist or prevention  
5 specialist;

6           “(L) a community health worker; and

7           “(M) a physician assistant.

8           “(2) ESEA TERMS.—The terms ‘local edu-  
9 cational agency’ and ‘State educational agency’ have  
10 the meanings given such terms in section 8101 of  
11 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of  
12 1965.

13           “(3) HEA TERMS.—(A) The terms ‘institution  
14 of higher education’, ‘high-need local educational  
15 agency’, and ‘junior or community college’ have the  
16 meanings given such terms, respectively, in sections  
17 101(a), 200, and 312(f) of the Higher Education  
18 Act of 1965.

19           “(B) The term ‘historically Black college or  
20 university’ has the meaning given the term ‘part B  
21 institution’ under section 322 of the Higher Edu-  
22 cation Act of 1965.

1       “(j) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
2 is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
3 \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.”.

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