

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 404

To direct the Surgeon General to conduct a study regarding the use of mobile devices in elementary and secondary schools, and to establish a pilot program of awarding grants to enable certain schools to create a school environment free of mobile devices.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 5, 2025

Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. KELLY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To direct the Surgeon General to conduct a study regarding the use of mobile devices in elementary and secondary schools, and to establish a pilot program of awarding grants to enable certain schools to create a school environment free of mobile devices.

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 “Focus on Learning
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “child with a
2 disability”, “elementary school”, “English learner”,
3 “local educational agency”, and “secondary school”
4 have the meaning given those terms in section 8101
5 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of
6 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

7 (2) MOBILE DEVICE.—The term “mobile de-
8 vice” means any personal mobile telephone or other
9 portable electronic communication device with which
10 a user engages in a call or writes or sends a message
11 or any device in which the user plays a game or
12 watches a video, except that such term does not in-
13 clude school-issued devices.

14 (3) SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FREE OF MOBILE
15 DEVICES.—The term “school environment free of
16 mobile devices” means an elementary school or sec-
17 ondary school in which mobile devices of students
18 are kept in a secure container that is controlled by
19 a school administrator.

20 (4) SCHOOL HOURS.—The term “school hours”
21 means regular school hours for instruction, including
22 lunch periods, free periods on school grounds, and
23 time between classroom instruction.

1 **SEC. 3. STUDY.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the
3 date of enactment of this Act, the Surgeon General, in
4 consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human
5 Services, shall complete a study regarding the use of mo-
6 bile devices in elementary schools and secondary schools
7 nationwide, including—

8 (1) the impact of such use on—

9 (A) student learning and academic achieve-
10 ment;

11 (B) student educational outcomes and en-
12 gagement;

13 (C) student mental health;

14 (D) classroom instruction; and

15 (E) school climate and student behavior;
16 and

17 (2) an analysis of data collected from partici-
18 pating schools in the pilot program under section 4.

19 (b) REPORT.—The Surgeon General, in consultation
20 with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall
21 submit a report to Congress containing the results of the
22 study conducted under subsection (a), and shall make
23 such report publicly available.

24 **SEC. 4. PILOT PROGRAM.**

25 (a) PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.—The Secretary of
26 Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Health

1 and Human Services, shall establish a pilot program,
2 through which the Secretary of Education, in consultation
3 with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall
4 award grants to local educational agencies to enable par-
5 ticipating schools served by such agencies (referred to in
6 this section as “participating schools”) to purchase secure
7 containers and install lockers in order to create a school
8 environment free of mobile devices.

9 (b) APPLICATION.—A local educational agency desir-
10 ing to participate in the program under this section shall
11 submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in
12 such manner, and containing such information as the Sec-
13 retary may reasonably require, including—

14 (1) an assurance that such local educational
15 agency will identify and select participating schools
16 in a manner that engages the students, parents,
17 educators, principal, school leaders, and specialized
18 instructional support personnel, of such schools;

19 (2) an assurance that each participating school
20 will have a communication system (which may be
21 mobile devices) allowing teachers, administrators,
22 and staff to communicate with each other and with
23 local emergency responders;

1 (3) an assurance that each participating school
2 will have a clear process for students to be able to
3 contact their parents;

4 (4) the policy of each participating school on
5 mobile device use during school hours as of the date
6 of the application; and

7 (5) a description of what each participating
8 school's new policy on mobile device use during
9 school hours will be upon beginning participation in
10 the pilot program under this section.

11 (c) SELECTION.—The Secretary of Education, in con-
12 sultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
13 ices, shall select local educational agency applicants for
14 participation in the pilot program based on the Secretary
15 of Education's determination that the applicant's partici-
16 pation will likely yield helpful information relevant to test-
17 ing a school environment free of mobile devices.

18 (d) EXEMPTIONS.—Participating schools may, while
19 maintaining a school environment free of mobile devices,
20 allow exemptions such that mobile devices may be used
21 during school hours—

22 (1) to monitor or treat health conditions;

23 (2) by students who are children with disabil-
24 ities; and

1 (3) by students who are English learners for
2 translation purposes.

3 (e) PARENTAL NOTIFICATION.—Each local edu-
4 cational agency that applies for participation in the pilot
5 program under this section shall—

6 (1) notify parents of students enrolled in ele-
7 mentary schools and secondary schools that are
8 served by the agency and that may become partici-
9 pating schools—

10 (A) not less than 30 days before submit-
11 ting an application under this section; and

12 (B) upon receipt of a grant award under
13 this section; and

14 (2) solicit feedback from such parents before
15 applying for the grant about the local educational
16 agency's desire to implement a school environment
17 free of mobile devices.

18 (f) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Secretary of
19 Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
20 ices may use not more than 2 percent of the amounts
21 made available to carry out this section for administrative
22 expenses, data collection, and carrying out the study re-
23 quired under section 3.

24 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
25 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,

- 1 \$5,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2025 through
- 2 2029.

