

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 906

To require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a pilot program to support evidence-based mental health peer support activities for students.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 6, 2025

Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a pilot program to support evidence-based mental health peer support activities for students.

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 “Peer to Peer Mental
5 Health Support Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PEER-TO-PEER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary for Men-
8 tal Health and Substance Use (referred to in this section
9 as the “Assistant Secretary”), in consultation with the

1 Secretary of Education, may, as appropriate and within
 2 a relevant existing program, carry out a pilot program and
 3 make awards, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities
 4 to support evidence-based mental health peer support ac-
 5 tivities for students enrolled in secondary schools (as such
 6 term is defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and
 7 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)).

8 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive an award
 9 under this section, an entity shall—

10 (1) be a State, political subdivision of a State,
 11 territory, or Indian Tribe or Tribal organization (as
 12 such terms are defined in section 4 of the Indian
 13 Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act
 14 (25 U.S.C. 5304)); and

15 (2) submit to the Assistant Secretary an appli-
 16 cation at such time, in such manner, and containing
 17 such information as the Assistant Secretary may re-
 18 quire, including a description of how the entity will
 19 measure and evaluate progress of the program in
 20 improving student mental health outcomes.

21 (c) USE OF AMOUNTS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), an
 23 eligible entity may use amounts provided under this
 24 section to implement or operate evidence-based men-
 25 tal health peer support activities in 1 or more sec-

1 ondary schools (as such term is defined in section
2 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education
3 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)) within the jurisdic-
4 tion of such eligible entity, which may include pro-
5 viding training, as appropriate, to students, adult
6 supervisors, and other appropriate individuals to im-
7 prove the early identification of, response to, and re-
8 covery supports for mental health and substance use
9 challenges, reduce associated risks, and promote re-
10 siliency.

11 (2) PROGRAM OVERSIGHT.—An eligible entity
12 shall ensure that mental health peer support activi-
13 ties under paragraph (1) are overseen by a school-
14 based mental health professional.

15 (3) FERPA.—Any education records of the
16 student collected or maintained under this section
17 shall have the protections provided in section 444 of
18 the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C.
19 1232g).

20 (d) EVALUATION; REPORT.—

21 (1) EVALUATION.—The Assistant Secretary
22 shall carry out an evaluation to measure the efficacy
23 of the program under this section. The evaluation
24 shall—

1 (A) measure participation rates in mental
2 health peer support activities, including any as-
3 sociated trends;

4 (B) describe the specific trainings pro-
5 vided, or other activities carried out under the
6 pilot program;

7 (C) assess whether such mental health peer
8 support activities impacted mental health out-
9 comes of participating students; and

10 (D) measure the effectiveness of the pilot
11 program in connecting students to professional
12 mental health services compared to other evi-
13 dence-based strategies.

14 (2) REPORT.—The Assistant Secretary shall
15 prepare and submit to the Committee on Health,
16 Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and
17 the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Edu-
18 cation and Workforce of the House of Representa-
19 tives a report containing the results of the evalua-
20 tion conducted under paragraph (1).

21 (e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Assistant Sec-
22 retary, in coordination with the Secretary of Education,
23 shall provide technical assistance to eligible entities apply-
24 ing for and receiving an award under this section, includ-

1 ing the identification and dissemination of best practices
2 for mental health peer support programs for students.

3 (f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Section 4001 of the
4 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
5 U.S.C. 7101) shall apply to an entity receiving a grant,
6 contract, or cooperative agreement under this section in
7 the same manner as such section applies to an entity re-
8 ceiving funding under title IV of such Act, except that sec-
9 tion 4001(a)(2)(B)(i) of such Act shall not apply.

10 (g) SUNSET.—This section shall terminate on Sep-
11 tember 30, 2029.

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