

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1387

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to increase civics education programs, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 7, 2023

Mr. CLEAVER (for himself, Mr. BOWMAN, Ms. BROWN, Ms. BUSH, Mr. CARSON, Mr. CASTEN, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. GOTTHEIMER, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. IVEY, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. MENG, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. MOSKOWITZ, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RASKIN, Ms. ROSS, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Ms. SCANLON, Ms. SEWELL, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. TITUS, Mr. TONKO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## A BILL

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to increase civics education programs, 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 “Civics Learning Act  
5 of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The dearth of civics lessons available to stu-  
4 dents across the United States has helped to foster  
5 a political climate that is deeply partisan and di-  
6 vided.

7 (2) Polarization in the United States has frac-  
8 tured public morale in our democratic institutions  
9 and has created an environment in which people are  
10 less likely to be well-informed on the processes of  
11 our constitutional republic, the current state of af-  
12 fairs, and the importance of participating in the po-  
13 litical process.

14 (3) It is impossible to tell the true, full history  
15 of this Nation and recognize the power of our rep-  
16 resentative democracy without discussing the painful  
17 and powerful history of the civil rights movement. It  
18 is incumbent on Congress to ensure the full history  
19 of our great Nation is being taught to the next gen-  
20 eration of leaders.

21 (4) According to the Annenberg Constitution  
22 Day Civics Survey conducted by the Annenberg Pub-  
23 lic Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania,  
24 in 2022—

25 (A) only 47 percent of people in the United  
26 States surveyed were capable of naming all 3

1 branches of government, while 25 percent of  
2 Americans were not able to name any of the  
3 branches of government;

4 (B) less than half of Americans (46 per-  
5 cent) correctly stated that the Supreme Court  
6 has the final responsibility for determining the  
7 constitutionality of laws if the President and  
8 Supreme Court disagree; and

9 (C) 26 percent could not name any of the  
10 rights guaranteed under the First Amendment.

11 (5) In 2018, only 24 percent of eighth graders  
12 were found to have performed at or above the pro-  
13 ficient level on the National Assessment of Edu-  
14 cational Progress civics exam conducted by the Na-  
15 tional Center of Education Studies.

16 (6) A lack of knowledge regarding the struc-  
17 tural basics of our constitutional republic and the  
18 history of our struggle for suffrage and civil rights  
19 creates an increasingly ill-equipped electorate which  
20 over time, can, and will continue to, contribute to a  
21 weakened democracy.

22 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE ELEMENTARY AND SEC-**  
23 **ONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965.**

24 Section 2233 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-  
25 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6663) is amended—

1 (1) in subsection (a)—

2 (A) by inserting “and prioritize innovative  
3 civics learning and teaching, including by en-  
4 couraging” after “to encourage”; and

5 (B) by inserting “(including students and  
6 teachers at high-need schools (as defined in sec-  
7 tion 2221))” before the period;

8 (2) in subsection (b)—

9 (A) by inserting “and appropriated under  
10 subsection (h) of this section” after  
11 “2231(b)(2)”; and

12 (B) by striking paragraph (2) and insert-  
13 ing the following:

14 “(2) may include—

15 “(A) hands-on civic engagement activities  
16 for teachers and students;

17 “(B) activities about the history and prin-  
18 ciple of the Constitution of the United States,  
19 including the Bill of Rights, women’s suffrage,  
20 and the civil rights movement;

21 “(C) before-school, during-school, after-  
22 school, and extracurricular activities;

23 “(D) activities that include service learning  
24 and community service projects that are linked  
25 to school curriculum;

1           “(E) activities that encourage and support  
2           student participation in school governance; and

3           “(F) online and video game based learn-  
4           ing.”;

5           (3) in subsection (c), by striking paragraph (3)  
6           and inserting the following:

7           “(3) DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS.—

8           “(A) DIVERSITY OF GRANTS.—In awarding  
9           grants under this section, the Secretary shall  
10          ensure that, to the extent practicable, grants  
11          are distributed among eligible entities that will  
12          serve geographically diverse areas, including  
13          urban, suburban, and rural areas, and public el-  
14          ementary schools.

15          “(B) ALLOCATION OF GRANT FUNDING.—  
16          To the extent practicable based on the applica-  
17          tions received under subsection (d), the Sec-  
18          retary shall ensure that—

19                  “(i) not less than 30 percent of the  
20                  grant funds under this section are awarded  
21                  to eligible entities that serve elementary  
22                  school students and teachers;

23                  “(ii) not less than 30 percent of the  
24                  grant funds under this section are awarded

1 to eligible entities that serve middle school  
2 students and teachers; and

3 “(iii) not more than 40 percent of the  
4 grant funds under this section are awarded  
5 to eligible entities that serve high school  
6 students and teachers.”;

7 (4) in subsection (d), by inserting “, and con-  
8 taining such information,” after “manner”; and

9 (5) by adding at the end the following:

10 “(f) GRANT AWARD PREFERENCE.—In awarding  
11 grants under this section, the Secretary shall give pref-  
12 erence to applications for programs that carry out the ac-  
13 tivities listed in subsection (b)(2) for the purpose of  
14 strengthening civics education and learning.

15 “(g) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after  
16 the end of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to  
17 the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the  
18 House of Representatives and the Committee on Health,  
19 Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate a report  
20 containing—

21 “(1) a description of each eligible entity award-  
22 ed a grant under this section during the preceding  
23 fiscal year;

24 “(2) a description of whether each such eligible  
25 entity was able to meet each of the purposes under

1 subsection (a), and if so, how such eligible entity  
2 was able to meet such purposes; and

3 “(3) any recommendations for continuation of  
4 the grant program under this section.

5 “(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In ad-  
6 dition to the amounts reserved under section 2231(b)(2),  
7 there are authorized to be appropriated \$70,000,000 to  
8 carry out this section for fiscal year 2024.”.

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