

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 8993

To direct the Secretary of Education 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.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 10, 2024

Mr. WESTERMAN (for himself, Mr. TRONE, Mr. LATURNER, and Mr. CROW) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Education 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 Secretary of Education,  
4 in 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 Secretary of Education, in con-  
20 sultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-  
21 ices, shall submit a report to Congress containing the re-  
22 sults of the study conducted under subsection (a), and  
23 shall make such report publicly available.

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

25 (a) PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.—The Secretary of  
26 Education shall establish a pilot program, through which

1 the Secretary of Education shall award grants to local  
2 educational agencies to enable participating schools served  
3 by such agencies (referred to in this section as “partici-  
4 pating schools”) to purchase secure containers and install  
5 lockers in order to create a school environment free of mo-  
6 bile devices.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8           (c) SELECTION.—The Secretary of Education shall  
9           select local educational agency applicants for participation  
10          in the pilot program based on the Secretary of Education's  
11          determination that the applicant's participation will likely  
12          yield helpful information relevant to testing a school envi-  
13          ronment free of mobile devices.

14          (d) EXEMPTIONS.—Participating schools may, while  
15          maintaining a school environment free of mobile devices,  
16          allow exemptions such that mobile devices may be used  
17          during school hours—

18                 (1) to monitor or treat health conditions;

19                 (2) by students who are children with disabili-  
20                 ties; and

21                 (3) by students who are English learners for  
22                 translation purposes.

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

1           (1) notify parents of students enrolled in ele-  
2           mentary schools and secondary schools that are  
3           served by the agency and that may become partici-  
4           pating schools—

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

7                   (B) upon receipt of a grant award under  
8           this section; and

9           (2) solicit feedback from such parents before  
10          applying for the grant about the local educational  
11          agency’s desire to implement a school environment  
12          free of mobile devices.

13          (f) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Secretary of  
14          Education may use not more than 2 percent of the  
15          amounts made available to carry out this section for ad-  
16          ministrative expenses, data collection, and carrying out the  
17          study required under section 3.

18          (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
19          are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,  
20          \$5,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2024 through  
21          2028.

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