

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2560

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make college affordable and accessible.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 22, 2016

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

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make college affordable and accessible.

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 “Making College Afford-
5 able and Accessible Act of 2016”.

6 **SEC. 2. CREDIT-BASED ACADEMIC TRANSITION PROGRAMS.**

7 Part B of title VII of the Higher Education Act of
8 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1138 et seq.) is amended—

9 (1) by redesignating section 745 as section 746;

1 (2) in section 746, as redesignated by para-
2 graph (1), by striking “fiscal year 2009” and insert-
3 ing “fiscal year 2017”; and

4 (3) by inserting after section 744 the following:

5 **“SEC. 745. CREDIT-BASED ACADEMIC TRANSITION PRO-**
6 **GRAMS.**

7 “(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to ex-
8 pand access for high school students to the opportunities
9 offered in credit-based academic transition programs es-
10 tablished through partnerships between high schools and
11 institutions of higher education utilizing dual or concur-
12 rent enrollment programs or early college high school pro-
13 grams that enable such students to earn college credits
14 while in high school.

15 “(b) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—In this section, the
16 term ‘eligible institution’ means an institution of higher
17 education that carries out a dual or concurrent enrollment
18 program or an early college high school program that en-
19 ables high school students to earn college credits while in
20 high school.

21 “(c) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary may
22 award grants to eligible institutions to carry out credit-
23 based academic transition programs described in sub-
24 section (a).

1 “(d) APPLICATION.—An eligible institution that de-
2 sires to receive a grant under this section shall submit to
3 the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner,
4 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
5 quire.

6 “(e) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
7 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible institu-
8 tions that serve students from low-income families, stu-
9 dents from rural communities, or students who are the
10 first in their family to receive postsecondary education.

11 “(f) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible institution that re-
12 ceives a grant under this section shall use the grant
13 funds—

14 “(1) to carry out a dual or concurrent enroll-
15 ment program or an early college high school pro-
16 gram for high school students, through which such
17 students while enrolled in high school are enrolled in
18 postsecondary courses at the eligible institution,
19 through which such students can earn college credits
20 that can be transferred to 2-year and 4-year institu-
21 tions of higher education in the State;

22 “(2) to provide teachers, principals, and other
23 school leaders with professional development activi-
24 ties that enhance or enable the provision of postsec-
25 ondary coursework through a dual or concurrent en-

1 rollment program or an early college high school
2 program; and

3 “(3) to support activities such as—

4 “(A) designing the curriculum and se-
5 quence of courses in collaboration with teachers
6 from the local educational agency and faculty
7 from the eligible institution;

8 “(B) establishing a course articulation
9 process for defining and approving courses for
10 high school and postsecondary credit or creden-
11 tials for both 2-year and 4-year institutions of
12 higher education in the State;

13 “(C) outreach programs to provide elemen-
14 tary school and secondary school students, espe-
15 cially those in middle grades, and their parents,
16 teachers, school counselors, and principals in-
17 formation about and academic preparation for
18 the credit-based academic transition programs
19 described in subsection (a);

20 “(D) helping students meet eligibility cri-
21 teria for postsecondary courses and ensuring
22 that students understand how credits earned
23 will transfer to institutions of higher education
24 in the State; and

1 “(E) coordinating secondary and postsec-
2 ondary support services and academic cal-
3 endars.

4 “(g) FLEXIBILITY OF FUNDS.—An eligible institu-
5 tion that receives a grant under this section may use grant
6 funds for any of the costs associated with carrying out
7 credit-based academic transition programs described in
8 subsection (a), including the costs of—

9 “(1) tuition and fees, books, and required in-
10 structional materials for such program so that stu-
11 dents will not be required to pay tuition or fees for
12 postsecondary courses; and

13 “(2) transportation to and from such program.

14 “(h) EVALUATION AND REPORT.—Each eligible insti-
15 tution receiving a grant under this section shall—

16 “(1) conduct an independent evaluation of the
17 effectiveness of the activities carried out by such eli-
18 gible institution under this section; and

19 “(2) prepare and submit to the Secretary a re-
20 port containing the results of the evaluation de-
21 scribed in paragraph (1).

22 “(i) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
23 tion shall be construed to impose on any State or public
24 institution of higher education any requirement or rule re-
25 garding credit-based academic transition programs de-

1 scribed in subsection (a) that is inconsistent with State
2 law.”.

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