

[DISCUSSION DRAFT]118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION**H. R.** _____

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out an early childhood educator loan assistance program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out an early childhood educator loan assistance program, 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 “Child Care Workforce
5 Development Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE**
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 (a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary of Health and
4 Human Services may carry out a program of entering into
5 contracts with eligible early childhood educators under
6 which such educators agree to serve for a period of 5 years
7 as early childhood educators with a qualified employer, in
8 consideration of the Federal Government agreeing to
9 repay, for each year of such service, not more than \$6,000
10 of the principal and interest of the educational loans of
11 such educators.

12 (b) **RECERTIFICATION.**—An eligible early childhood
13 educator seeking to continue to receive payments under
14 this section shall submit on an annual basis to the Sec-
15 retary such information as the Secretary may require to
16 certify that the educator is continuing to meet the criteria
17 to be considered an eligible early childhood educator.

18 (c) **MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF LOAN.**—The total amount
19 of payments received by an eligible early childhood educa-
20 tor under this section may not exceed the total amount
21 of the principal and interest of the educational loans of
22 such educator.

23 (d) **APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS.**—The
24 following provisions of the National Health Service Corps
25 Loan Assistance Program established in subpart III of
26 part D of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 2541

1 et seq.) shall apply to the program established under this
2 section in the same manner and to the same extent as
3 such provisions apply to the National Health Service
4 Corps Loan Assistance Program:

5 (1) Paragraphs (1) through (3) of section
6 338B(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 254l–1(c); relating
7 to application information, understandability, and
8 availability).

9 (2) Section 338B(c)(4) of such Act (42 U.S.C.
10 254l–1(c)(4); relating to recruitment and retention).

11 (3) Section 338B(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C.
12 254l–1(d); relating to factors considered in providing
13 contracts).

14 (4) Section 338(e) of such Act (42 U.S.C.
15 254l–1(e); relating to the approval required for par-
16 ticipation).

17 (5) Section 338B(f) of such Act (42 U.S.C.
18 254l–1(f); relating to contents of contracts).

19 (6) Section 338B(g) of such Act (42 U.S.C.
20 254l–1(g); relating to payments, including repay-
21 ment schedule and tax liability).

22 (e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 5 years
23 after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary
24 shall submit to the Congress a report on the implementa-
25 tion of this section.

1 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) The term “eligible early childhood educa-
3 tor” means an individual who—

4 (A) as of the date on which the agreement
5 referred to in subsection (a)(1) is entered
6 into—

7 (i) has outstanding Federal direct
8 loans obtained for purposes of pursuing an
9 associate’s degree, including a child devel-
10 opment associate credential, a bachelor’s
11 degree, a graduate degree, or a combined
12 bachelor and master’s degree, in early
13 childhood education or a related field from
14 an accredited institution (including any
15 such loan for which the individual is en-
16 rolled in an income-based repayment plan);
17 and

18 (ii) is in good standing with respect to
19 the loans referred to in clause (i); and

20 (B) agrees to—

21 (i) serve as an early childhood educa-
22 tor with a qualified employer for a period
23 of not less than 5 years; and

1 (ii) make timely payments with re-
2 spect to the loans described in subpara-
3 graph (A)(i).

4 (2) The term “qualified employer” means a
5 childcare provider that receives or is eligible to re-
6 ceive vouchers or assistance under the Child Care
7 and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42
8 U.S.C. 9857 et seq.).

9 (3) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary
10 of Health and Human Services.

11 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
12 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
13 \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2030.

14 **SEC. 3. GRANTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 180
16 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
17 retary of Education (referred to in this section as the
18 “Secretary”) shall carry out a program under which the
19 Secretary makes payments to institutions of higher edu-
20 cation with a qualified early childhood educator program
21 to enable such institutions to make grants, on a competi-
22 tive basis, to eligible individuals who file an application
23 and agreement in accordance with subsections (b) and (c).

24 (b) APPLICATIONS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall periodi-
2 cally set dates by which eligible individuals shall file
3 applications for a grant under this section. Each eli-
4 gible individual desiring a grant under this section
5 shall file with the Secretary an application con-
6 taining such information and assurances as the Sec-
7 retary may determine necessary to enable the Sec-
8 retary to carry out the functions and responsibilities
9 of this section.

10 (2) RENEWAL.—A grant awarded under this
11 section may be renewed for additional one-year peri-
12 ods if—

13 (A) the recipient submits a renewal appli-
14 cation containing such information and assur-
15 ances as the Secretary may determine nec-
16 essary; and

17 (B) the grant is renewed not more than
18 three times, for a total of not more than four
19 academic years for each eligible recipient.

20 (c) SERVICE OBLIGATION.—

21 (1) AGREEMENTS TO SERVE.—Each application
22 under subsection (b) shall include, or be accom-
23 panied by—

24 (A) an agreement by the applicant that—

1 (i) in the event that the applicant re-
2 ceives a grant under this section, the appli-
3 cant shall—

4 (I) not later than 4 years after
5 completing the qualified early child-
6 hood program for which the applicant
7 will be receiving such grant, serve as
8 a full-time or part-time educator in a
9 licensed early learning program for a
10 total of not less than one academic
11 year, and four additional months for
12 each subsequent grant renewal; and

13 (II) submit a certification of
14 service in a licensed early learning
15 program in such form as the Sec-
16 retary may determine necessary; and

17 (ii) in the event that the applicant is
18 determined to have failed or refused to
19 carry out such service obligation, the sum
20 of the amounts of any grants received by
21 such applicant under this section will be
22 treated as a loan and collected from the
23 applicant in accordance with paragraph (3)
24 and the regulations thereunder; and

1 (B) a plain-language disclosure form devel-
2 oped by the Secretary that clearly describes the
3 nature of the grant award, the service obliga-
4 tion, and the loan repayment requirements that
5 are the consequence of the failure to complete
6 the service obligation.

7 (2) TREATMENT OF CONCURRENT SERVICE.—

8 An individual who serves as a full or part-time edu-
9 cator in a licensed early childhood education pro-
10 gram concurrently while enrolled in a qualified early
11 childhood educator program may count such service
12 toward the fulfillment of the service obligation in the
13 agreement under paragraph (1).

14 (3) REPAYMENT FOR FAILURE TO COMPLETE
15 SERVICE.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
17 subparagraph (B), in the event that any recipi-
18 ent of a grant under this section fails or refuses
19 to comply with the service obligation in the
20 agreement under paragraph (1), the sum of the
21 amounts of any grants received by such recipi-
22 ent shall, upon a determination of such a fail-
23 ure or refusal in such service obligation, be
24 treated as a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Staf-
25 ford Loan under part D of title IV of the High-

1 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087a et
2 seq.) except that—

3 (i) no interest shall accrue on such
4 amounts; and

5 (ii) such amounts shall be subject to
6 repayment in accordance with—

7 (I) an income-contingent or in-
8 come-based repayment plan described
9 in subparagraph (D) or (E) of section
10 455(d)(1) of the Higher Education
11 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(d)(1)),
12 respectively, if the individual meets
13 the eligibility requirements for such a
14 repayment plan; and

15 (II) such other terms and condi-
16 tions as are specified by the Secretary
17 in regulations promulgated under this
18 section.

19 (B) **HARDSHIP EXTENSION.**—In the case
20 of a recipient who has made a good faith effort
21 to find employment in a licensed early learning
22 program and has been unable to acquire such
23 employment, the Secretary is authorized to pro-
24 vide a hardship extension for a period of not
25 more than one year to grant recipients who fail

1 to complete their service requirement within the
2 4-year period described in paragraph (1)(A)(i).

3 (d) GRANT AMOUNT.—An eligible individual selected
4 to receive a grant or a grant renewal under this section
5 shall receive a grant in an amount not to exceed \$4,000
6 for each academic year during which the individual is en-
7 rolled on a full-time or part-time basis in the qualified
8 early childhood educator program for which the grant was
9 awarded.

10 (e) GRANT DISBURSEMENT.—Payments under this
11 section to an eligible institution shall be made in accord-
12 ance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary for
13 such purpose and in such manner as will best accomplish
14 the purposes of this section, provided—

15 (1) any disbursement made by crediting a grant
16 recipient's account shall be limited to tuition and
17 fees and other materials necessary for the comple-
18 tion of coursework in a qualified early childhood ed-
19 ucator program as determined by the Secretary; and

20 (2) not less than 85 percent of any funds pro-
21 vided to an eligible institution under subsection (a)
22 shall be advanced to the institution prior to the start
23 of each payment period and shall be based upon an
24 amount requested by the institution as needed to
25 cover the total cost of grants awarded to eligible re-

1 cipients until such time as the Secretary determines
2 and publishes in the Federal Register with an oppor-
3 tunity for comment, an alternative payment system
4 that provides payments to institutions in an accurate
5 and timely manner, except that this sentence shall
6 not be construed to limit the authority of the Sec-
7 retary to place an institution on a reimbursement
8 system of payment.

9 (f) DIRECT PAYMENT.—Nothing in this section shall
10 be construed to prohibit the Secretary from making a
11 grant directly to an eligible individual in a case in which
12 an institution of higher education with a qualified early
13 childhood educator program does not participate in the
14 program under subsection (a).

15 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 (1) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term “eligible
17 individual” means an individual who is enrolled on
18 a full-time or part-time basis in a qualified early
19 childhood educator program.

20 (2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
21 term “institution of higher education” has the
22 meaning given that term in section 102 of the High-
23 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

24 (3) QUALIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR
25 PROGRAM.—The term “qualified early childhood ed-

1 ucator program” means a course of study leading to
2 an associate’s degree or a certificate in early child-
3 hood education or a related field from an institution
4 of higher education.

5 (4) LICENSED EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM.—

6 The term “licensed early learning program” means
7 any State-licensed or State-regulated program or
8 provider, regardless of setting or funding source,
9 that provides early care and education for children
10 from birth to kindergarten entry, including pro-
11 grams operated by child care centers and in family
12 child care homes.

13 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
15 appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000
16 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

17 (2) LIMITATION.—Of the amount made avail-
18 able under paragraph (1) in any fiscal year, not
19 more than 3 percent may be used by the Secretary
20 for evaluation, monitoring, salaries, and administra-
21 tive expenses.