

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2262

To prioritize educating and training for existing and new environmental health professionals.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 10, 2019

Mrs. LAWRENCE (for herself, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. RASKIN, and Mr. COHEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Labor, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To prioritize educating and training for existing and new environmental health professionals.

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 “Environmental Health  
5 Workforce Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds as follows:

1           (1) The environmental health workforce is vital  
2 to protecting the health and safety of the public.

3           (2) For years, State and local governmental  
4 public health agencies have reported substantial  
5 workforce losses and other challenges to the environ-  
6 mental health workforce.

7           (3) According to the Association of State and  
8 Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the Na-  
9 tional Association of County and City Health Offi-  
10 cials (NACCHO), more than 50,600 State and local  
11 environmental health workforce jobs have been lost  
12 since 2008. This represents approximately 22 per-  
13 cent of the total State and local environmental  
14 health workforce.

15           (4) In the coming years, the retiring Baby  
16 Boomer Generation will lead to a further decrease in  
17 the environmental health workforce.

18           (5) Currently, only 28 States require a creden-  
19 tial for environmental health workers that is an im-  
20 partial, third-party endorsement of an individual's  
21 professional knowledge and experience.

22           (6) Educating and training existing and new  
23 environmental health professionals should be a na-  
24 tional public health goal.

1 **SEC. 3. MODEL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR**  
2 **CREDENTIALING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**  
3 **WORKERS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the  
5 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and  
6 Human Services, in coordination with appropriate na-  
7 tional professional organizations, Federal, State, local,  
8 and tribal governmental agencies, and private-sector and  
9 nongovernmental entities, shall develop model standards  
10 and guidelines for credentialing environmental health  
11 workers.

12 (b) PROVISION OF STANDARDS AND TECHNICAL AS-  
13 SISTANCE.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services  
14 shall provide to State, local, and tribal governments—

15 (1) the model standards and guidelines devel-  
16 oped under subsection (a); and

17 (2) technical assistance in credentialing envi-  
18 ronmental health workers.

19 **SEC. 4. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOP-**  
20 **MENT PLAN.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—To ensure that programs and ac-  
22 tivities (including education, training, and payment pro-  
23 grams) of the Department of Health and Human Services  
24 for developing the environmental health workforce meet  
25 national needs, the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-

1 ices shall develop a comprehensive and coordinated plan  
2 for such programs and activities that—

3 (1) includes performance measures to more  
4 clearly determine the extent to which these programs  
5 and activities are meeting the Department’s stra-  
6 tegic goal of strengthening the environmental health  
7 workforce;

8 (2) identifies and communicates to stakeholders  
9 any gaps between existing programs and activities  
10 and future environmental health workforce needs  
11 identified in workforce projections of the Health Re-  
12 sources and Services Administration;

13 (3) identifies actions needed to address such  
14 identified gaps; and

15 (4) identifies any additional statutory authority  
16 that is needed by the Department to implement such  
17 identified actions.

18 (b) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2  
19 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
20 retary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the  
21 Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of  
22 the Senate, and to the Committees on Energy and Com-  
23 merce and Education and Labor of the House of Rep-  
24 resentatives, the plan developed under subsection (a).

1 **SEC. 5. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOP-**  
2 **MENT REPORT.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the  
4 date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General  
5 of the United States shall examine and identify best prac-  
6 tices in 6 States (as described in subsection (b)) related  
7 to training and credentialing requirements for environ-  
8 mental health workers and submit to the Committee on  
9 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and  
10 the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House  
11 of Representatives a report that includes information con-  
12 cerning—

13 (1) types of environmental health workers em-  
14 ployed at State, local, and city health departments  
15 and independent environmental health agencies;

16 (2) educational backgrounds of environmental  
17 health workers;

18 (3) whether environmental health workers are  
19 credentialed or registered, and what type of creden-  
20 tial or registration each worker has received;

21 (4) State requirements for continuing education  
22 for environmental health workers;

23 (5) whether State, local, and city health depart-  
24 ments and independent environmental health agen-  
25 cies track continuing education units for their envi-  
26 ronmental health workers; and

1           (6) how frequently any exam required to qualify  
2           environmental health workers is updated and re-  
3           viewed to ensure that the exam is consistent with  
4           current law.

5           (b) SELECTION OF STATES.—The report described in  
6           subsection (a) shall be based upon the examination of such  
7           best practices with respect to 3 States that have  
8           credentialing requirements for environmental health work-  
9           ers (such as Maryland, Ohio, and Washington) and 3  
10          States that do not have such requirements (such as Indi-  
11          ana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania).

12          **SEC. 6. PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS.**

13          Section 455(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965  
14          (20 U.S.C. 1087e(m)) is amended in paragraph (3)(B)—

15                 (1) in clause (i), by striking “or” at the end;

16                 (2) in clause (ii), by striking the period at the  
17          end and inserting “; or”; and

18                 (3) by adding at the end the following:

19                         “(iii) a full-time job as an environ-  
20                         mental health worker (as defined in section  
21                         7 of the Environmental Health Workforce  
22                         Act of 2019) who is accredited, certified,  
23                         or licensed in accordance with applicable  
24                         law.”.

1 **SEC. 7. DEFINITION.**

2       In this Act, the terms “environmental health worker”  
3 and “environmental health workforce” refer to public  
4 health workers who investigate and assess hazardous envi-  
5 ronmental agents in various environmental settings and  
6 develop, promote, and enforce guidelines, policies, and  
7 interventions to control such hazards.

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