

114TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 4415

To establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Program.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

Mrs. LAWRENCE (for herself, Ms. MOORE, Mr. HASTINGS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. LEE, and Mr. HONDA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## A BILL

To establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Program.

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 “Early Pell Promise  
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT PRO-**  
7 **GRAM.**

8 Subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Edu-  
9 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a et seq.) is amended  
10 by adding at the end the following:

1 **“SEC. 401B. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT**  
2 **PROGRAM.**

3 “(a) PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—The Secretary is au-  
4 thorized to carry out an Early Federal Pell Grant Com-  
5 mitment Program (referred to in this section as the ‘Pro-  
6 gram’) under which the Secretary shall—

7 “(1) award grants to State educational agencies  
8 to pay the administrative expenses incurred in par-  
9 ticipating in the Program; and

10 “(2) make a commitment to award Federal Pell  
11 Grants to eligible students in accordance with this  
12 section.

13 “(b) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The Program shall  
14 meet the following requirements:

15 “(1) ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—A student shall be eli-  
17 gible to receive a commitment from the Sec-  
18 retary to receive a Federal Pell Grant early in  
19 the student’s academic career if the student—

20 “(i) is in 8th grade; and

21 “(ii) is eligible for a free or reduced  
22 price lunch under the Richard B. Russell  
23 National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.  
24 1751 et seq.).

25 “(2) FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT.—

1           “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
2           subparagraph (B), each eligible student who  
3           participates in the Program shall receive a com-  
4           mitment from the Secretary to receive a Fed-  
5           eral Pell Grant during the first 2 academic  
6           years that the student is in attendance at an in-  
7           stitution of higher education as an under-  
8           graduate student, if the student—

9                   “(i) applies for Federal financial aid  
10                   (via the FAFSA) during the student’s sen-  
11                   ior year of secondary school and during the  
12                   succeeding academic year; and

13                   “(ii) enrolls at such institution of  
14                   higher education—

15                           “(I) not later than 3 years after  
16                           such student receives a secondary  
17                           school diploma or its recognized equiv-  
18                           alent; or

19                           “(II) if such student becomes a  
20                           member of the Armed Forces (includ-  
21                           ing the National Guard or Reserves),  
22                           not later than 3 years after such stu-  
23                           dent is discharged, separated, or re-  
24                           leased from the Armed Forces (includ-  
25                           ing the National Guard or Reserves).

1           “(B) EXCEPTION TO COMMITMENT.—If an  
2           eligible student receives a commitment from the  
3           Secretary to receive a Federal Pell Grant dur-  
4           ing the first 2 academic years that the student  
5           is in attendance at an institution of higher edu-  
6           cation as an undergraduate student and the  
7           student applies for Federal financial aid (via  
8           the FAFSA) during the student’s senior year of  
9           secondary school or during the succeeding aca-  
10          ademic year, and the expected family contribu-  
11          tion of the student for either of such years is  
12          more than 2 times the threshold amount for  
13          Federal Pell Grant eligibility for such year,  
14          then such student shall not receive a Federal  
15          Pell Grant under this section for the succeeding  
16          academic year. Such student shall continue to  
17          be eligible for any other Federal student finan-  
18          cial aid for which the student is otherwise eligi-  
19          ble.

20          “(3) APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL PELL GRANT  
21          REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements of section 401  
22          shall apply to Federal Pell Grants awarded pursuant  
23          to this section, except that with respect to each eligi-  
24          ble student who participates in the Program and is  
25          not subject the exception under paragraph (2)(B),

1 the amount of each such eligible student's Federal  
2 Pell Grant only shall be calculated by deeming such  
3 student to have an expected family contribution  
4 equal to zero.

5 “(c) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY APPLICA-  
6 TIONS.—

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational  
8 agency desiring to participate in the Program shall  
9 submit an application to the Secretary at such time  
10 and in such manner as the Secretary may require.

11 “(2) CONTENTS.—Each application shall in-  
12 clude—

13 “(A) a description of the proposed targeted  
14 information campaign for the Program and a  
15 copy of the plan described in subsection (e)(2);

16 “(B) an assurance that the State edu-  
17 cational agency will fully cooperate with the on-  
18 going evaluation of the Program; and

19 “(C) such other information as the Sec-  
20 retary may require.

21 “(d) EVALUATION.—

22 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appro-  
23 priated under subsection (f) for a fiscal year, the  
24 Secretary shall reserve not more than \$1,000,000 to  
25 award a grant or contract to an organization outside

1 the Department for an independent evaluation of the  
2 impact of the Program.

3 “(2) COMPETITIVE BASIS.—The grant or con-  
4 tract shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

5 “(3) MATTERS EVALUATED.—The evaluation  
6 described in this subsection shall consider metrics  
7 established by the Secretary that emphasize college  
8 access and success, encouraging low-income students  
9 to pursue higher education, and the cost effective-  
10 ness of the program.

11 “(4) DISSEMINATION.—The findings of the  
12 evaluation shall be widely disseminated to the public  
13 by the organization conducting the evaluation as well  
14 as by the Secretary.

15 “(e) TARGETED INFORMATION CAMPAIGN.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational  
17 agency receiving a grant under this section shall, in  
18 cooperation with the participating local educational  
19 agencies within the State and the Secretary, develop  
20 a targeted information campaign for the Program.

21 “(2) PLAN.—Each State educational agency re-  
22 ceiving a grant under this section shall include in  
23 the application submitted under subsection (c) a  
24 written plan for their proposed targeted information  
25 campaign. The plan shall include the following:

1           “(A) OUTREACH.—Outreach to students  
2           and their families, at a minimum, at the begin-  
3           ning and end of each academic year.

4           “(B) DISTRIBUTION.—How the State edu-  
5           cational agency plans to provide the outreach  
6           described in subparagraph (A) and to provide  
7           the information described in subparagraph (C).

8           “(C) INFORMATION.—The annual provi-  
9           sion by the State educational agency to all stu-  
10          dents and families participating in the Program  
11          of information regarding—

12                   “(i) the estimated statewide average  
13                   higher education institution cost data for  
14                   each academic year, which cost data shall  
15                   be disaggregated by—

16                           “(I) type of institution, includ-  
17                           ing—

18                                   “(aa) 2-year public colleges;

19                                   “(bb) 4-year public colleges;

20                                   “(cc) 4-year private colleges;

21                                   and

22                                   “(dd) private, for-profit col-  
23                                   leges; and

24                           “(II) component, including—

25                                   “(aa) tuition and fees; and

- 1 “(bb) room and board;
- 2 “(ii) Federal Pell Grants, including—
- 3 “(I) the maximum Federal Pell
- 4 Grant for each academic year;
- 5 “(II) when and how to apply for
- 6 a Federal Pell Grant; and
- 7 “(III) what the application pro-
- 8 cess for a Federal Pell Grant requires;
- 9 “(iii) State-specific college savings
- 10 programs;
- 11 “(iv) State-based financial aid, includ-
- 12 ing State-based merit aid; and
- 13 “(v) Federal financial aid available to
- 14 students, including eligibility criteria for
- 15 the Federal financial aid and an expla-
- 16 nation of the Federal financial aid pro-
- 17 grams.
- 18 “(3) ANNUAL INFORMATION.—The information
- 19 described in paragraph (2)(C) shall be provided to
- 20 eligible students annually for the duration of the
- 21 students’ participation in the Program.
- 22 “(4) RESERVATION.—Each State educational
- 23 agency receiving a grant under this section shall re-
- 24 serve \$200,000 of the grant funds received each fis-



1 cal year to carry out the targeted information cam-  
2 paign described in this subsection.

3 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
4 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
5 such sums as may be necessary.”.

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