

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5148

To improve program integrity through State evaluation of institutions of higher education, requirements for student complaint submissions, and the establishment of policies and procedures to address closure of institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 18, 2019

Mr. LEVIN of California (for himself, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. CISNEROS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To improve program integrity through State evaluation of institutions of higher education, requirements for student complaint submissions, and the establishment of policies and procedures to address closure of institutions of higher education, 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 “Higher Education
5 Standards Improvement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES.**

2 Section 495(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
3 (20 U.S.C. 1099a(a)) is amended—

4 (1) in paragraph (2)—

5 (A) by inserting “and the accrediting agen-
6 cy or association involved” after “Secretary”;

7 (B) by striking “revokes a license” and in-
8 serting “takes a negative action, or revokes a li-
9 cense,”; and

10 (C) by striking “and” at the end;

11 (2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at
12 the end and inserting a semicolon; and

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

14 “(4) evaluate each institution of higher edu-
15 cation located in the State or seeking authorization
16 to operate in the State to determine if such institu-
17 tion of higher education meets the applicable stand-
18 ards of the State relating to—

19 “(A) facilities, equipment, and supplies;
20 and

21 “(B) measures of program length and
22 other factors relevant for a student or graduate
23 to receive a professional license from the State;

24 “(5) certify to the Secretary that the State
25 shall—

26 “(A) accept student complaints from—

1 “(i) all students attending an institu-
2 tion of higher education located in the
3 State; and

4 “(ii) all students who are residents of
5 the State and attend an institution of
6 higher education not located in the State
7 through correspondence or distance edu-
8 cation; and

9 “(B) report to the Secretary and accred-
10 iting bodies—

11 “(i) relevant student complaints re-
12 ceived by the State, including multiple stu-
13 dent complaints that present consistent al-
14 legations with respect to an institution of
15 higher education in the State; and

16 “(ii) such other complaints the Sec-
17 retary determines necessary; and

18 “(6) establish policies and procedures to antici-
19 pate and respond to the closure of an institution of
20 higher education, which shall include—

21 “(A) the maintenance of sufficient cash re-
22 serves (or an equivalent alternative) in accord-
23 ance with regulations issued pursuant to section
24 498(c)(6)(A) to ensure repayment of any re-
25 quired refunds;

1 “(B) a plan to address ensuring custodial
2 record-keeping of institutional records and stu-
3 dent transcripts in the case of such a closure;

4 “(C) the maintenance of contact informa-
5 tion adequate to ensure communication directly
6 between the State and each student in the case
7 of such a closure; and

8 “(D) in the case of an institution of higher
9 education located in the State, to develop a
10 process to identify when a campus of such insti-
11 tution of higher education closes in any State.”.

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