

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3158

To remove college cost as a barrier to every student having access to a well-prepared and diverse educator workforce, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 8, 2020

Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, and Ms. WARREN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To remove college cost as a barrier to every student having access to a well-prepared and diverse educator workforce, 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 “Diversifying by Invest-
5 ing in Educators and Students to Improve Outcomes For
6 Youth Act” or the “Diversify Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Schools predominantly enrolling historically
2 underserved students are often disproportionately
3 impacted by teacher shortages.

4 (2) Data shows that between 2009 and 2014,
5 teacher education enrollments dropped from 691,000
6 to 451,000, a 35-percent reduction. This amounts to
7 a decrease of almost 240,000 professionals on their
8 way to becoming teachers in the year 2014, as com-
9 pared to 2009.

10 (3) Research suggests that service scholarship
11 programs like the TEACH Grant Program are suc-
12 cessful when they are both administratively manage-
13 able and when subsidies are large enough to sub-
14 stantially offset training costs. Efforts to increase
15 the TEACH Grant award amount must be combined
16 with efforts to ensure that the program is adminis-
17 tratively manageable. In order for the TEACH
18 Grant Program to meet its full potential, the re-
19 search is clear that both criteria need to be ad-
20 dressed.

21 (4) The TEACH Grant's award amount has not
22 increased since its creation in the bipartisan College
23 Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (Public Law
24 110–84). In addition, due to the Budget Control Act
25 of 2011 (Public Law 112–25), the maximum

1 amount of grant aid available under the TEACH
2 Grant Program of \$4,000 a year has been cut for
3 a majority of the program's existence. This comes at
4 a time when the yearly full cost of a public 4-year
5 college for an in-State student exceeds \$20,000.
6 Further, more than two-thirds of individuals enter-
7 ing the field of education borrow money to pay for
8 their higher education, resulting in an average debt
9 of about \$20,000 for those with a bachelor's degree
10 and \$50,000 for those with a master's degree.

11 (5) Grant programs can eliminate or reduce the
12 need to borrow student loans in order to afford a
13 college education. This is important because a col-
14 lege student's potential debt burden influences the
15 student's decisions about what profession to enter,
16 with the result that the student is less likely to pur-
17 sue a career in education or take other low-paying
18 jobs after graduation if the student expects to incur
19 more debt. This is especially true for students of
20 color, who, according to a recent report, are more
21 likely to come from families that are unable to con-
22 tribute financially to their higher education.

23 (6) Students with disabilities, including stu-
24 dents of color with disabilities, are also likely to ac-
25 crue significant student loan debt. This often results

1 from limited ability to work while in school due to
2 the increased time needed for coursework.

3 (7) Teachers of color face unique barriers to en-
4 tering and staying in the profession. For example,
5 teachers of color are more likely to enter teaching
6 through alternative pathways due to the high cost of
7 traditional teacher preparation programs and the
8 debt burden faced by college students of color.
9 Lower quality pathways can result in less effective
10 teaching and high turnover rates. Research shows
11 that candidates who receive comprehensive prepara-
12 tion are 2 to 3 times more likely to stay in teaching
13 than those who receive little training. In many cases,
14 however, teachers of color are more likely to begin
15 teaching without having completed comprehensive
16 preparation and entering instead through alternative
17 routes that often skip student teaching and key
18 coursework, leaving teachers to learn on the job.

19 (8) Research shows that recruiting and retain-
20 ing a diverse teacher workforce is key to improving
21 outcomes for all students and for closing achieve-
22 ment gaps. While White students also benefit by
23 learning from teachers of color, the impact is espe-
24 cially significant for students of color, who have
25 higher test scores, are more likely to graduate high

1 school, and more likely to succeed in college when
 2 they have had teachers of color who serve as role
 3 models and support their attachment to school and
 4 learning.

5 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF**
 6 **1965.**

7 Section 420M of the Higher Education Act of 1965
 8 (20 U.S.C. 1070g–1) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “\$4,000”
 10 and inserting “\$8,000”; and

11 (2) in subsection (d)—

12 (A) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking
 13 “\$16,000” and inserting “\$32,000”; and

14 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking “\$8,000”
 15 and inserting “\$16,000”.

16 **SEC. 4. AMENDMENT TO THE BALANCED BUDGET AND DEF-**
 17 **ICIT CONTROL ACT.**

18 Section 255(h) of the Balanced Budget and Emer-
 19 gency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 905(h)) is
 20 amended by inserting after the item relating to “Supple-
 21 mental Security Income Program (28–0406–0–1–609).”

22 the following new item:

23 “TEACH Grants under subpart 9 of part A of
 24 title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.”.

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