

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2544

To require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to carry out a study to add to the scientific knowledge on reducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and well-being, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 18, 2017

Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself and Mrs. DAVIS of California) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, 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

A BILL

To require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to carry out a study to add to the scientific knowledge on reducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and well-being, 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 “Teacher Health and
5 Wellness Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) High levels of stress are adversely affecting
4 teachers' health. Teachers with high levels of stress
5 are less effective in raising student achievement than
6 their healthier peers.

7 (2) Elementary school teachers who have great-
8 er stress and show more symptoms of depression
9 create classroom environments that are less condu-
10 cive to learning.

11 (3) Stress is contributing to the high turnover
12 rate among teachers, which causes instability for
13 students and communities. This leads to higher costs
14 for school districts to train new teachers and hinders
15 students' academic success.

16 (4) School organization, low job autonomy, and
17 a lack of ability to access teacher leadership oppor-
18 tunities are main sources of teacher stress. If teach-
19 ers are unable to manage their stress levels, this
20 leads to lower level teacher instruction, which then
21 impacts student well-being.

22 (5) High teacher turnover brings down stu-
23 dents' math and language arts scores.

24 (6) According to a 2014 Gallup survey, 46 per-
25 cent of teachers experience high daily stress during
26 the school year. This percentage is tied for the high-

1 est rate of high daily stress among occupations and
2 is a significant increase from teacher stress levels in
3 1985.

4 (7) Stress affects the health and well-being of
5 teachers. In a study of high school teachers, 46 per-
6 cent of teachers were diagnosed with excessive day-
7 time sleepiness and 51 percent with poor sleep qual-
8 ity, which compromises health quality of life and
9 teaching performance.

10 **SEC. 3. STUDY ON REDUCING TEACHER STRESS AND IN-**
11 **CREASING TEACHER RETENTION AND WELL-**
12 **BEING.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National In-
14 stitutes of Health shall carry out a five-year study on re-
15 ducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and
16 well-being by implementing and analyzing the results of
17 any of the following programs:

18 (1) Workplace wellness programs that are de-
19 signed to improve teacher health, attendance, and
20 engagement.

21 (2) Social emotional learning programs that
22 help teachers improve student engagement in the
23 classroom.

24 (3) Teacher stress management programs that
25 improve teacher performance.

1 (4) Mentoring and induction programs during
2 the school year and teacher pre-service that improve
3 teacher well-being.

4 (5) Organizational interventions such as prin-
5 cipal training programs that reduce stress through
6 supervisor/peer support and increasing opportunities
7 for teachers to participate in professional learning
8 communities, teacher leadership positions, and deci-
9 sion making regarding school interventions and man-
10 agement.

11 (6) Teacher residency programs that provide
12 mental health and psychological support.

13 (7) Complementary health approaches, such as
14 mindfulness meditation, that improve teacher per-
15 formance.

16 (8) School reorganization that creates the con-
17 ditions to facilitate the transmission and sharing of
18 knowledge among teachers.

19 (9) Other innovative evidence-based approaches
20 that reduce stress and increase well-being in the
21 teaching profession, which may include increased
22 compensation.

23 (b) REPORT.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
25 after the end of the study carried out under sub-

1 section (a), the Director shall submit to the Com-
2 mittee on Education and the Workforce of the
3 House of Representatives and the Committee on
4 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Sen-
5 ate a report including—

6 (A) the results of the study carried out
7 under subsection (a); and

8 (B) recommendations for—

9 (i) decreasing teacher stress and in-
10 creasing teacher retention and well-being;
11 and

12 (ii) lowering stress-related health care
13 costs for teachers.

14 (2) AVAILABILITY.—The Director shall make
15 publicly available the report submitted under para-
16 graph (1).

17 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

18 (1) COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH APPROACH.—
19 The term “complementary health approach” includes
20 integrative health care, adjunctive health care, and
21 functional medicine.

22 (2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
23 the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

24 (3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
25 term “institution of higher education” has the

1 meaning given that term in section 101(a) of the
2 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

3 (4) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
4 “State educational agency” has the meaning given
5 that term in section 8101 of the Elementary and
6 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

7 (d) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.—No ad-
8 ditional funds are authorized to carry out the require-
9 ments of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out
10 using amounts otherwise authorized.

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