

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 978

To direct the Secretary of Education to establish an award program recognizing excellence exhibited by public school system employees providing services to students in prekindergarten through higher education.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 27, 2017

Mrs. MURRAY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Education to establish an award program recognizing excellence exhibited by public school system employees providing services to students in prekindergarten through higher education.

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 “Recognizing Achieve-  
5 ment in Classified School Employees Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Classified school employees provide valuable  
2       service to public schools in the United States.

3           (2) Classified school employees provide essential  
4       services, such as transportation, facilities maintenance and operations, food service, safety, and  
5       health care.  
6

7           (3) Classified school employees play a vital role  
8       in providing for the welfare and safety of students.

9           (4) Classified school employees strive for excellence in all areas of service to the education community.  
10  
11

12           (5) Exemplary classified school employees  
13       should be recognized for their outstanding contributions to quality education in the United States.  
14

15 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

16       In this Act:

17           (1) **CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEE.**—The term  
18       “classified school employee” means a public employee of a State or of any political subdivision of a  
19       State, who works in any grade from prekindergarten  
20       through higher education in any of the following 9  
21       occupational specialties:  
22

23                   (A) Paraeducator services.

24                   (B) Clerical and administrative services.

25                   (C) Transportation services.

1 (D) Food and nutrition services.

2 (E) Custodial and maintenance services.

3 (F) Security services.

4 (G) Health and student services.

5 (H) Technical services.

6 (I) Skilled trades.

7 (2) OTHER DEFINITIONS.—The terms used in  
8 this Act have the meaning given the terms in section  
9 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education  
10 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

11 **SEC. 4. RECOGNITION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education shall  
13 establish a national recognition program to be known as  
14 the “Recognizing Inspirational School Employees (RISE)  
15 Award Program”. The purpose of the program shall be  
16 to recognize and promote the commitment and excellence  
17 exhibited by classified school employees in public schools  
18 who provide exemplary service to students in prekindergarten through higher education.

20 (b) AWARD.—Prior to March 31 of each year (beginning with the second calendar year that begins after the  
21 date of enactment of this Act), the Recognizing Inspirational School Employees (RISE) Award Program shall  
22 recommend to the Secretary a classified school employee

1 to receive the Recognizing Inspirational School Employees  
 2 (RISE) Award for the year.

3 (c) SELECTION PROCESS.—

4 (1) NOMINATION PROCESS.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than Novem-  
 6 ber 1 of each year (beginning with the first cal-  
 7 endar year that begins after the date of enact-  
 8 ment of this Act), the Secretary shall solicit  
 9 nominations of classified school employees in  
 10 public schools from the occupational specialties  
 11 described in section 3(1) from the chief State  
 12 school officer of each State.

13 (B) NOMINATION SUBMISSIONS.—In order  
 14 for individuals in a State to be eligible to re-  
 15 ceive recognition under this section, the chief  
 16 State school officer shall consider nominations  
 17 submitted by the following:

18 (i) Local educational agencies.

19 (ii) School administrators.

20 (iii) Professional associations.

21 (iv) Labor organizations.

22 (v) Educational service agencies.

23 (vi) Any other group determined ap-  
 24 propriate by the Recognizing Inspirational  
 25 School Employees (RISE) Award Program.

1           (2) DEMONSTRATION.—Each chief State school  
2       officer of a State who desires individuals in the  
3       State to receive recognition under this section shall  
4       submit the nominations described in paragraph (1)  
5       to the Secretary in such manner as may be required  
6       by the Recognizing Inspirational School Employees  
7       (RISE) Award Program. Each such nomination  
8       shall contain, at a minimum, demonstrations of ex-  
9       cellence in the following areas:

10               (A) Work performance.

11               (B) School and community involvement.

12               (C) Leadership and commitment.

13               (D) Local support.

14               (E) Enhancement of classified school em-  
15       ployees' image in the community and schools.

16               (F) Any other area of superior perform-  
17       ance, such as health and safety promotion or ef-  
18       ficient use of energy or other resources.

19           (3) SELECTION.—The Recognizing Inspira-  
20       tional School Employees (RISE) Award Program  
21       shall develop uniform national guidelines for evalu-  
22       ating nominations submitted under paragraph (2) in  
23       order to select the most deserving nominees based on

- 1 the demonstrations made in the areas described in
- 2 such paragraph.

