

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3737

To improve the public health workforce loan repayment program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 14, 2020

Ms. SMITH (for herself and Mr. BOOKER) introduced the following bill; which
was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To improve the public health workforce loan repayment
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 “Strengthening the
5 Public Health Workforce Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE LOAN REPAYMENT**
7 **PROGRAM.**

8 Section 776 of the Public Health Service Act (42
9 U.S.C. 295f–1) is amended—
10 (1) in subsection (a)—

1 (A) by striking “supply of” and inserting
2 “supply of, and encourage recruitment of,”; and

3 (B) by striking “Federal,”;

4 (2) in subsection (b)—

5 (A) in paragraph (1)(A)—

6 (i) by striking “accredited academic
7 educational institution in a State or terri-
8 tory in the final year” and inserting “insti-
9 tution of higher education in the final se-
10 mester (or equivalent)”;

11 (ii) by striking “or health professions
12 degree or certificate” and inserting “de-
13 gree, a health professions degree, or a de-
14 gree in computer science, information
15 science, information systems, information
16 technology, or statistics”;

17 (iii) by striking “Federal,”; and

18 (iv) by adding “or” after the semi-
19 colon at the end;

20 (B) in paragraph (1)(B)—

21 (i) in clause (i)—

22 (I) by striking “accredited edu-
23 cational institution in a State or terri-
24 tory” and inserting “institution of
25 higher education”; and

1 (II) by striking “or health profes-
 2 sions degree or certificate” and insert-
 3 ing “degree, a health professions de-
 4 gree, or a degree in computer science,
 5 information science, information sys-
 6 tems, information technology, or sta-
 7 tistics”; and

8 (ii) in clause (ii), by striking “Fed-
 9 eral,”; and

10 (C) in paragraph (4), by striking “section
 11 455(m), 428J, 428K, 428L, or 460” and in-
 12 serting “section 428K or 428L”;

13 (3) in subsection (c)—

14 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “or cer-
 15 tificate”; and

16 (B) in paragraph (2)—

17 (i) by striking “Federal,”; and

18 (ii) by striking “equal to the greater
 19 of—” and all that follows through the end
 20 of subparagraph (B) and inserting “of at
 21 least 2 consecutive years;”;

22 (4) in subsection (d)—

23 (A) by amending paragraph (1) to read as
 24 follows:

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—A loan repayment provided
 2 for an individual under a written contract under the
 3 Program shall consist of payment, in accordance
 4 with paragraph (2), for the individual toward the
 5 outstanding principal and interest on education
 6 loans incurred by the individual in the pursuit of the
 7 relevant degree in accordance with the terms of the
 8 contract.”;

9 (B) in paragraph (2)—

10 (i) by striking “For each year” and
 11 inserting the following:

12 “(A) IN GENERAL.—For each year”; and

13 (ii) by adding at the end the fol-
 14 lowing:

15 “(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—The Secretary
 16 may take action in making awards to ensure
 17 that—

18 “(i) not less than 50 percent of con-
 19 tracts under subsection (c) are awarded to
 20 individuals, who at the time of entering
 21 into the contract, are not employed by a
 22 local, State, or tribal public health agency
 23 or a related training fellowship, as recog-
 24 nized by the Secretary; and

1 “(ii) the contracts provided under
 2 subsection (c) are equitably distributed
 3 among—

4 “(I) the geographical regions of
 5 the United States; and

6 “(II) local, State, and tribal pub-
 7 lic health departments.”; and

8 (C) by amending paragraph (3) to read as
 9 follows:

10 “(3) TAX TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS.—For
 11 purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, a
 12 payment made under this section shall be treated in
 13 the same manner as an amount received under sec-
 14 tion 338B(g), as described in section 108(f)(4) of
 15 such Code.”;

16 (5) in subsection (e)—

17 (A) by striking “receiving a degree or cer-
 18 tificate from a health professions or other re-
 19 lated school” and inserting “with a contract to
 20 serve under subsection (c)”;

21 (B) by inserting “or extended” after “post-
 22 poned”;

23 (6) by redesignating subsection (g) as sub-
 24 section (h);

1 (7) by inserting after subsection (f) the fol-
 2 lowing:

3 “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 “(1) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—
 5 The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the
 6 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
 7 Education Act of 1965.

8 “(2) FULL-TIME.—The term ‘full-time’, with
 9 respect to employment, means employment—

10 “(A) with a single qualifying employer for
 11 not less than 30 hours per week; or

12 “(B) with 2 or more qualifying employers
 13 for a total of not less than 30 hours per week.

14 “(3) EDUCATION LOAN.—The term ‘education
 15 loan’ means—

16 “(A) any loan made, insured, or guaran-
 17 teed under part B, D, or E of title IV of the
 18 Higher Education Act of 1965;

19 “(B) any loan made under subpart II of
 20 part A of this title or part E of title VIII;

21 “(C) a private education loan, as defined
 22 in section 140 of the Truth in Lending Act; or

23 “(D) any other loan funded, insured, or
 24 guaranteed by any Federal agency that is not

1 the Department of Education and that is issued
2 directly to a student.”; and

3 (8) in subsection (h), as so redesignated, by
4 striking “\$195,000,000 for fiscal year 2010, and
5 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal
6 years 2011 through 2015” and inserting
7 “\$200,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through
8 2025”.

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