

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3273

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out an early childhood educator loan assistance program, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 8, 2025

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts (for herself, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. GOMEZ, Ms. McCLELLAN, Ms. PETERSEN, and Ms. TOKUDA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out an early childhood educator loan assistance program, 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 “Child Care Workforce  
5 Development Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE**  
7 **PROGRAM.**

8 (a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary of Health and  
9 Human Services may carry out a program of entering into

1 contracts with eligible early childhood educators under  
2 which such educators agree to serve for a period of 5 years  
3 as early childhood educators with a qualified employer, in  
4 consideration of the Federal Government agreeing to  
5 repay, for each year of such service, not more than \$6,000  
6 of the principal and interest of the educational loans of  
7 such educators.

8 (b) RECERTIFICATION.—An eligible early childhood  
9 educator seeking to continue to receive payments under  
10 this section shall submit on an annual basis to the Sec-  
11 retary such information as the Secretary may require to  
12 certify that the educator is continuing to meet the criteria  
13 to be considered an eligible early childhood educator.

14 (c) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF LOAN.—The total amount  
15 of payments received by an eligible early childhood educa-  
16 tor under this section may not exceed the total amount  
17 of the principal and interest of the educational loans of  
18 such educator.

19 (d) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS.—The  
20 following provisions of the National Health Service Corps  
21 Loan Repayment Program established under section 338B  
22 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254l) shall  
23 apply to the program established under this section in the  
24 same manner and to the same extent as such provisions

1 apply to the National Health Service Corps Loan Repay-  
2 ment Program:

3 (1) Paragraphs (1) through (3) of section  
4 338B(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 254l-1(c); relating  
5 to application information, understandability, and  
6 availability).

7 (2) Section 338B(e)(4) of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
8 254l-1(c)(4); relating to recruitment and retention).

9 (3) Section 338B(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
10 254l-1(d); relating to factors considered in providing  
11 contracts).

12 (4) Section 338B(e) of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
13 254l-1(e); relating to the approval required for par-  
14 ticipation).

15 (5) Section 338B(f) of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
16 254l-1(f); relating to contents of contracts).

17 (6) Section 338B(g) of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
18 254l-1(g); relating to payments, including repay-  
19 ment schedule and tax liability).

20 (e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 5 years  
21 after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary  
22 shall submit to the Congress a report on the implementa-  
23 tion of this section.

24 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1           (1) The term “eligible early childhood educa-  
2           tor” means an individual who—

3                   (A) as of the date on which the agreement  
4                   referred to in subsection (a)(1) is entered  
5                   into—

6                           (i) has outstanding Federal direct  
7                           loans obtained for purposes of pursuing an  
8                           associate’s degree, including a child devel-  
9                           opment associate credential, a bachelor’s  
10                           degree, a graduate degree, or a combined  
11                           bachelor and master’s degree, in early  
12                           childhood education or a related field from  
13                           an accredited institution (including any  
14                           such loan for which the individual is en-  
15                           rolled in an income-based repayment plan);  
16                           and

17                           (ii) is in good standing with respect to  
18                           the loans referred to in clause (i); and

19                   (B) agrees to—

20                           (i) serve as an early childhood educa-  
21                           tor with a qualified employer for a period  
22                           of not less than 5 years; and

23                           (ii) make timely payments with re-  
24                           spect to the loans described in subpara-  
25                           graph (A)(i).

1           (2) The term “qualified employer” means a  
2           childcare provider that receives or is eligible to re-  
3           ceive vouchers or assistance under the Child Care  
4           and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42  
5           U.S.C. 9857 et seq.).

6           (3) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary  
7           of Health and Human Services.

8           (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
9           authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
10          \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2031.

11          **SEC. 3. GRANTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.**

12          (a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 180  
13          days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-  
14          retary of Education (referred to in this section as the  
15          “Secretary”) shall carry out a program under which the  
16          Secretary makes payments to institutions of higher edu-  
17          cation with a qualified early childhood educator program  
18          to enable such institutions to make grants, on a competi-  
19          tive basis, to eligible individuals who file an application  
20          and agreement in accordance with subsections (b) and (c).

21          (b) APPLICATIONS.—

22                  (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall periodi-  
23                  cally set dates by which eligible individuals shall file  
24                  applications for a grant under this section. Each eli-  
25                  gible individual desiring a grant under this section

1 shall file with the Secretary an application con-  
2 taining such information and assurances as the Sec-  
3 retary may determine necessary to enable the Sec-  
4 retary to carry out the functions and responsibilities  
5 of this section.

6 (2) RENEWAL.—A grant awarded under this  
7 section may be renewed for additional one-year peri-  
8 ods if—

9 (A) the recipient submits a renewal appli-  
10 cation containing such information and assur-  
11 ances as the Secretary may determine nec-  
12 essary; and

13 (B) the grant is renewed not more than  
14 three times, for a total of not more than four  
15 academic years for each eligible recipient.

16 (c) SERVICE OBLIGATION.—

17 (1) AGREEMENTS TO SERVE.—Each application  
18 under subsection (b) shall include, or be accom-  
19 panied by—

20 (A) an agreement by the applicant that—

21 (i) in the event that the applicant re-  
22 ceives a grant under this section, the appli-  
23 cant shall—

24 (I) not later than 4 years after  
25 completing the qualified early child-

1                   hood program for which the applicant  
2                   will be receiving such grant, serve as  
3                   a full-time or part-time educator in a  
4                   licensed early learning program for a  
5                   total of not less than one academic  
6                   year, and four additional months for  
7                   each subsequent grant renewal; and

8                   (II) submit a certification of  
9                   service in a licensed early learning  
10                  program in such form as the Sec-  
11                  retary may determine necessary; and

12                  (ii) in the event that the applicant is  
13                  determined to have failed or refused to  
14                  carry out such service obligation, the sum  
15                  of the amounts of any grants received by  
16                  such applicant under this section will be  
17                  treated as a loan and collected from the  
18                  applicant in accordance with paragraph (3)  
19                  and the regulations thereunder; and

20                  (B) a plain-language disclosure form devel-  
21                  oped by the Secretary that clearly describes the  
22                  nature of the grant award, the service obliga-  
23                  tion, and the loan repayment requirements that  
24                  are the consequence of the failure to complete  
25                  the service obligation.

1           (2) TREATMENT OF CONCURRENT SERVICE.—

2           An individual who serves as a full or part-time edu-  
3           cator in a licensed early childhood education pro-  
4           gram concurrently while enrolled in a qualified early  
5           childhood educator program may count such service  
6           toward the fulfillment of the service obligation in the  
7           agreement under paragraph (1).

8           (3) REPAYMENT FOR FAILURE TO COMPLETE  
9           SERVICE.—

10           (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
11           subparagraph (B), in the event that any recipi-  
12           ent of a grant under this section fails or refuses  
13           to comply with the service obligation in the  
14           agreement under paragraph (1), the sum of the  
15           amounts of any grants received by such recipi-  
16           ent shall, upon a determination of such a fail-  
17           ure or refusal in such service obligation, be  
18           treated as a Federal Direct Unsubsidized Staf-  
19           ford Loan under part D of title IV of the High-  
20           er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087a et  
21           seq.) except that—

22                   (i) no interest shall accrue on such  
23                   amounts; and

24                   (ii) such amounts shall be subject to  
25                   repayment in accordance with—

1 (I) an income-contingent or in-  
2 come-based repayment plan described  
3 in subparagraph (D) or (E) of section  
4 455(d)(1) of the Higher Education  
5 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(d)(1)),  
6 respectively, if the individual meets  
7 the eligibility requirements for such a  
8 repayment plan; and

9 (II) such other terms and condi-  
10 tions as are specified by the Secretary  
11 in regulations promulgated under this  
12 section.

13 (B) HARDSHIP EXTENSION.—In the case  
14 of a recipient who has made a good faith effort  
15 to find employment in a licensed early learning  
16 program and has been unable to acquire such  
17 employment, the Secretary is authorized to pro-  
18 vide a hardship extension for a period of not  
19 more than one year to grant recipients who fail  
20 to complete their service requirement within the  
21 4-year period described in paragraph (1)(A)(i).

22 (d) GRANT AMOUNT.—An eligible individual selected  
23 to receive a grant or a grant renewal under this section  
24 shall receive a grant in an amount not to exceed \$4,000  
25 for each academic year during which the individual is en-

1 rolled on a full-time or part-time basis in the qualified  
2 early childhood educator program for which the grant was  
3 awarded.

4 (e) GRANT DISBURSEMENT.—Payments under this  
5 section to an eligible institution shall be made in accord-  
6 ance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary for  
7 such purpose and in such manner as will best accomplish  
8 the purposes of this section, provided—

9 (1) any disbursement made by crediting a grant  
10 recipient's account shall be limited to tuition and  
11 fees and other materials necessary for the comple-  
12 tion of coursework in a qualified early childhood ed-  
13 ucator program as determined by the Secretary; and

14 (2) not less than 85 percent of any funds pro-  
15 vided to an eligible institution under subsection (a)  
16 shall be advanced to the institution prior to the start  
17 of each payment period and shall be based upon an  
18 amount requested by the institution as needed to  
19 cover the total cost of grants awarded to eligible re-  
20 cipients until such time as the Secretary determines  
21 and publishes in the Federal Register with an oppor-  
22 tunity for comment, an alternative payment system  
23 that provides payments to institutions in an accurate  
24 and timely manner, except that this sentence shall  
25 not be construed to limit the authority of the Sec-

1       retary to place an institution on a reimbursement  
2       system of payment.

3       (f) DIRECT PAYMENT.—Nothing in this section shall  
4 be construed to prohibit the Secretary from making a  
5 grant directly to an eligible individual in a case in which  
6 an institution of higher education with a qualified early  
7 childhood educator program does not participate in the  
8 program under subsection (a).

9       (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10           (1) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—The term “eligible  
11 individual” means an individual who is enrolled on  
12 a full-time or part-time basis in a qualified early  
13 childhood educator program.

14           (2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The  
15 term “institution of higher education” has the  
16 meaning given that term in section 102 of the High-  
17 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

18           (3) QUALIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR  
19 PROGRAM.—The term “qualified early childhood ed-  
20 ucator program” means a course of study leading to  
21 an associate’s degree or a certificate in early child-  
22 hood education or a related field from an institution  
23 of higher education.

24           (4) LICENSED EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM.—  
25 The term “licensed early learning program” means

1 any State-licensed or State-regulated program or  
2 provider, regardless of setting or funding source,  
3 that provides early care and education for children  
4 from birth to kindergarten entry, including pro-  
5 grams operated by child care centers and in family  
6 child care homes.

7 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be  
9 appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000  
10 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.

11 (2) LIMITATION.—Of the amount made avail-  
12 able under paragraph (1) in any fiscal year, not  
13 more than 3 percent may be used by the Secretary  
14 for evaluation, monitoring, salaries, and administra-  
15 tive expenses.

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