

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5476

To direct the Secretary of Education to carry out a grant program to support the recruitment and retention of paraprofessionals in public elementary schools, secondary schools, and preschool programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2025

Mrs. MCBATH (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. POCAN, Mr. MANNION, Mr. MCGARVEY, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. MCCLELLAN, Mrs. MCCLAIN DELANEY, Ms. TITUS, Mr. KEATING, Mr. WHITESIDES, Ms. BALINT, Ms. SIMON, Ms. SALINAS, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. FIELDS, and Mr. SORENSEN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Education to carry out a grant program to support the recruitment and retention of paraprofessionals in public elementary schools, secondary schools, and preschool programs, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Preparing And Retain-
3 ing All (PARA) Educators Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. GRANTS TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO RECRUIT AND**
5 **RETAIN PARAPROFESSIONALS IN SCHOOLS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education shall
7 carry out a program under which the Secretary makes al-
8 lotments to State educational agencies to assist States,
9 local educational agencies, and educational service agen-
10 cies in recruiting and retaining paraprofessionals in public
11 elementary schools, secondary schools, and preschool pro-
12 grams.

13 (b) STATE-BY-STATE ALLOCATION.—Each State
14 educational agency that has an application approved by
15 the Secretary under subsection (e)(1) shall be allocated
16 an amount that bears the same relationship to the amount
17 appropriated to carry out this Act for each fiscal year as
18 the amount received by all local educational agencies in
19 the State under part A of title I of the Elementary and
20 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311 et
21 seq.) for the previous fiscal year bears to the total amount
22 received under such part for such fiscal year by all local
23 educational agencies in every State.

24 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—

25 (1) STATE RESERVATION.—A State educational
26 agency that receives an allotment under subsection

1 (b) may reserve not more than 5 percent of the al-
2 lotment for administrative activities relating to the
3 grant program under paragraph (2) and to carry out
4 statewide activities to support the recruitment and
5 retention of paraprofessionals in public elementary
6 schools, secondary schools, and preschool programs
7 in the State.

8 (2) SUBGRANTS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—From
9 amounts received under subsection (b) and not re-
10 served under paragraph (1), a State educational
11 agency shall make subgrants to eligible entities, on
12 a competitive basis, to support the recruitment and
13 retention of paraprofessionals in public elementary
14 schools, secondary schools, and preschool programs,
15 which may include activities such as—

16 (A) establishing paraprofessional leader in-
17 duction and mentoring programs that are evi-
18 dence-based (to the extent a State determines
19 that such evidence is reasonably available) and
20 designed to—

21 (i) improve classroom instruction and
22 student learning and achievement, includ-
23 ing through improving school leadership
24 programs; and

1 (ii) increase the retention of para-
2 professionals;

3 (B) developing and implementing high-
4 quality professional development programs to
5 recruit and retain paraprofessionals in the ele-
6 mentary schools, secondary schools, and pre-
7 school programs served by eligible entities;

8 (C) providing paraprofessionals with the
9 skills, credentials, or certifications needed to
10 educate all students, such as—

11 (i) a special education certificate;

12 (ii) an English learner certificate;

13 (iii) an advanced paraeducator certifi-
14 cation to support specialized instruction;

15 and

16 (iv) a certification in teaching; and

17 (D) increasing wages for paraprofessionals
18 or providing bonus pay incentives to retain and
19 recruit paraprofessionals.

20 (d) PRIORITY.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—In making subgrants to eli-
22 gible entities under subsection (c)(2), a State edu-
23 cational agency shall give priority to entities—

24 (A) that serve greater numbers or percent-
25 ages of children from low-income families;

1 (B) in which all schools served by the enti-
2 ty are designated with a locale code of 41, 42,
3 or 43, as determined by the Secretary of Edu-
4 cation; or

5 (C) in which all schools served by the enti-
6 ty—

7 (i) receive special assistance payments
8 under section 11(a)(1)(F) of the Richard
9 B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42
10 U.S.C. 1759a(a)(1)(F)); and

11 (ii) have an identified student percent-
12 age (as such term is defined in section
13 245.9(f)(1)(iii) of title 7, Code of Federal
14 Regulations (or any successor regulations))
15 of not less than the applicable threshold
16 under section 11(a)(1)(F)(viii) of the Rich-
17 ard B. Russell National School Lunch Act
18 (42 U.S.C. 1759a(a)(1)(F)(viii)).

19 (2) LOW-INCOME FAMILY.—For purposes of
20 paragraph (1)(A), the term “low-income family”
21 means a family—

22 (A) in which a child is eligible for the
23 school lunch program under the Richard B.
24 Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.
25 1751 et seq.);

1 (B) in which the child is—

2 (i) enrolled in a school that receives
3 special assistance payments under section
4 11(a)(1)(F) of the Richard B. Russell Na-
5 tional School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.
6 1759a(a)(1)(F)); and

7 (ii) is an identified student (as defined
8 in section 11(a)(1)(F)(i) of that Act);

9 (C) receiving assistance under the program
10 of block grants to States for temporary assist-
11 ance for needy families established under part
12 A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42
13 U.S.C. 601 et seq.); or

14 (D) in which the child is eligible to receive
15 medical assistance under the Medicaid program
16 under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42
17 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

18 (e) APPLICATIONS.—

19 (1) STATE APPLICATIONS.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive
21 a grant under subsection (a), a State edu-
22 cational agency shall submit an application to
23 the Secretary at such time, in such manner,
24 and containing such information as the Sec-
25 retary may require.

(B) REQUIRED ASSURANCES.—A State educational agency submitting an application under subparagraph (A) shall include in such application an assurance that—

(i) in making subgrants under subsection (c)(2), the State will give priority to eligible entities described in subsection (d); and

(ii) the State educational agency will comply with the reporting requirements under subsection (f).

(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a subgrant from a State educational agency under subsection (c)(2), an eligible entity shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the State educational agency may require.

(f) IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION.—On an annual basis, in each fiscal year for which a State educational agency receives a grant under this section, such agency shall prepare and submit to the Secretary of Education a report that includes—

(1) updated average paraprofessional pay baselines for that fiscal year, disaggregated by the state-

1 wide average and the average within the schools
2 served by each eligible entity in the State;

3 (2) a description of how the State and eligible
4 entities in the State increased the average wages for
5 paraprofessional baselines in a manner consistent
6 with the statewide annual goals for the cor-
7 responding fiscal year;

8 (3) updated data on the number of paraprofes-
9 sionals employed by eligible entities in the State—

10 (A) who earn less than the average wage
11 for paraprofessionals in the State; and

12 (B) who earn less than the average wage
13 for paraprofessionals employed by the eligible
14 entity concerned;

15 (4) identification of any eligible entity that used
16 a subgrant under subsection (c)(2) to increase the
17 number of paraprofessionals employed in the schools
18 and preschools served by such entity;

19 (5) a description of the actions the State edu-
20 cational agency will take in the next fiscal year to
21 support eligible entities experiencing a shortage of
22 paraprofessionals; and

23 (6) a description of any professional develop-
24 ment activities used by eligible entities to recruit and
25 retain paraprofessionals.

1 (g) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION FOR COLLECTIVE
2 BARGAINING.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2),
4 nothing in this section shall be construed to alter or
5 otherwise affect the rights, remedies, and procedures
6 afforded to school employees or employees of an eli-
7 gible entity under Federal, State, or local laws (in-
8 cluding applicable regulations or court orders) or
9 under the terms of collective bargaining agreements,
10 memoranda of understanding, or other agreements
11 between such employers and their employees.

12 (2) COMPLIANCE.—Paragraph (1) shall not be
13 construed to exempt a State, eligible entity, or
14 school from complying with this section or from ne-
15 gotiating in compliance with State labor laws to
16 comply with this section.

17 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
18 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act
19 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years
20 2026 through 2030.

21 (i) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

22 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
23 ty” means—

1 (A) an educational service agency that
2 serves a high-need school or a consortium of
3 high-need schools; or

4 (B) a local educational agency.

5 (2) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “educational
6 service agency”, “elementary school”, “English
7 learner”, “evidence-based”, “local educational agen-
8 cy”, “secondary school”, and “State educational
9 agency” have the meanings given those terms in sec-
10 tion 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
11 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

12 (3) HIGH-NEED SCHOOL.—The term “high-need
13 school” has the meaning given that term in section
14 2243(f)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
15 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6673(f)(2)).

16 (4) PARAPROFESSIONAL.—The term “para-
17 professional” has the meaning given that term in
18 section 3201 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
19 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7011).

20 (5) PRESCHOOL PROGRAM.—The term “pre-
21 school program” means a program that—

22 (A) provides for the care, development, and
23 education of infants, toddlers, or young children
24 age 5 and under;

1 (B) meets any applicable State or local
2 government licensing, certification, approval,
3 and registration requirements; and

4 (C) is operated by a public or private
5 school that is supported, sponsored, supervised,
6 or administered by an eligible entity.

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