

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7021

To establish a new educational exchange program to strengthen domestic mining education, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 12, 2026

Mr. OLSZEWSKI (for himself, Mrs. KIM, Mr. BERA, and Mr. HUIZENGA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To establish a new educational exchange program to strengthen domestic mining education, 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 “Critical Mineral Min-
5 ing Education Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the United States mining industry
8 and, more broadly, mining and mineral processing and re-
9 fining, is widely reported as facing a significant personnel

1 shortage. This shortage is driven by an aging workforce,
2 declining numbers of graduates entering mining careers,
3 and difficulty recruiting and retaining skilled workers.
4 Fifty percent of the current mining workforce is expected
5 to retire within the next 5 years. In 2023, only 14 United
6 States universities and colleges had mining and mining en-
7 gineer programs. Downstream segments, such as ore proc-
8 essing, refining, and metallurgy, are affected by the same
9 workforce trends. Institutions and personnel from allied
10 countries with mining expertise can share their knowledge
11 and experience with the United States workforce through
12 education exchange programs.

13 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

14 The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act
15 of 1961 (Public Law 87–256; 22 U.S.C. 2451 et seq.) is
16 amended by inserting after section 101 the following:

17 **“SEC. 101A. DEFINITIONS.**

18 “In this Act:

19 “(1) **ADVANCED DEGREE.**—The term ‘advanced
20 degree’ means a degree from an institution of higher
21 education that is a master’s or doctoral degree.

22 “(2) **CRITICAL MINERAL.**—The term ‘critical
23 mineral’—

24 “(A) has the meaning given such term in
25 section 7002(a)(3) of the Energy Act of 2020

1 (division Z of Public Law 116–260; 30 U.S.C.
2 1606(a)(3)); and

3 “(B) includes gold, and copper, and any
4 other mineral or mineral material the Secretary
5 of State determines—

6 “(i) to be essential to the economic or
7 national security of the United States; and

8 “(ii) has a supply chain vulnerable to
9 disruption.

10 “(3) EXCESS FOREIGN CURRENCIES.—The term
11 ‘excess foreign currencies’ means foreign currencies,
12 which, if acquired by the United States—

13 “(A) would be in excess of the normal re-
14 quirements of departments, agencies, and em-
15 bassies of the United States for such cur-
16 rencies, as determined by the President; and

17 “(B) would be available for the use of the
18 United States Government under applicable
19 agreements with the foreign country concerned.

20 “(4) FEDERAL EMPLOYEE.—The term ‘Federal
21 employee’—

22 “(A) means any employee described in sub-
23 paragraphs (A) through (F) of section
24 7342(a)(1) of title 5, United States Code; and

1 “(B) does not include a person described
2 in subparagraph (G) of such section.

3 “(5) GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED INTER-
4 NATIONAL EXCHANGES AND TRAINING.—The term
5 ‘Government-sponsored international exchanges and
6 training’ means the movement of people between
7 countries, financed wholly or in part with United
8 States Government funds—

9 “(A) to promote the sharing of ideas;

10 “(B) to develop skills; and

11 “(C) to foster mutual understanding and
12 cooperation.

13 “(6) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—
14 The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the
15 meaning given such term in section 101(a) of the
16 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
17 1001(a)).

18 “(7) HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE AND UNI-
19 VERSITY.—The term ‘historically Black college and
20 university’ has the meaning given the term ‘part B
21 institution’ in section 322(2) of the Higher Edu-
22 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061(2)).

23 “(8) MINING EDUCATION PROGRAM.—The term
24 ‘Mining Education Program’ means an academic
25 program related to the mining industry.

1 “(9) MINING INDUSTRY.—The term ‘mining in-
2 dustry’ means the mining industry of the United
3 States, which consists of activities related to natu-
4 rally occurring metal and nonmetal critical minerals,
5 including—

6 “(A) geological mapping, geophysical sur-
7 veying, geochemical sampling, and management
8 of geological data;

9 “(B) mineral system analysis, exploration,
10 and resource delineation, including exploratory
11 drilling and resource estimation and classifica-
12 tion;

13 “(C) project development, feasibility stud-
14 ies, financing, and permitting;

15 “(D) mine construction, extraction, and
16 operational support activities;

17 “(E) mineral processing, beneficiation,
18 smelting, refining, chemical conversion, and
19 separation;

20 “(F) material conversion and advanced
21 materials manufacturing;

22 “(G) transportation, logistics, and han-
23 dling of intermediate and finished material
24 products; and

1 “(H) reclamation, remediation, reuse, recy-
2 cling, and recovery of materials from primary
3 and secondary sources, including mine waste
4 and end-of-life products.

5 “(10) MINING PROFESSION.—The term ‘mining
6 profession’ means the body of jobs directly related to
7 the mining industry.

8 “(11) MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTION.—The
9 term ‘minority-serving institution’ means an eligible
10 institution under section 371(a) of the Higher Edu-
11 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a)).”.

12 **SEC. 4. CRITICAL MINERAL MINING FELLOWSHIP PRO-**
13 **GRAM.**

14 The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act
15 of 1961, as amended by section 3, is further amended by
16 adding at the end the following:

17 **“SEC. 116. CRITICAL MINERAL MINING FELLOWSHIP PRO-**
18 **GRAM.**

19 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is authorized to be es-
20 tablished the Critical Mineral Mining Fellowship Program
21 (referred to in this section as the ‘Fellowship Program’)
22 within the J. William Fulbright Educational Exchange
23 Program.

24 “(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Fellowship
25 Program are—

1 “(1) to advance foreign policy priorities of the
2 United States by promoting studies, research, and
3 international exchange in the mining industry;

4 “(2) to send United States students to mining
5 institutions abroad to build the capacity of the
6 United States mining workforce;

7 “(3) to develop a robust and skilled workforce
8 that can support and fill the gaps of the United
9 States’ growing domestic critical mineral supply
10 chain; and

11 “(4) to reduce dependency on foreign energy
12 and critical mineral supplies and enhance competi-
13 tiveness of the United States within the global crit-
14 ical mineral marketplace.

15 “(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The Bureau of Education
16 and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State (referred
17 to in this section as the ‘Bureau’) shall administer the Fel-
18 lowship Program in accordance with policy guidelines es-
19 tablished by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (re-
20 ferred to in this section as the ‘Board’), in consultation
21 with binational Fulbright Commissions, mining industry
22 leaders, institutions of higher education, foreign govern-
23 ments, and United States embassies in eligible countries.

24 “(d) SELECTION OF FELLOWS.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Bureau shall deter-
2 mine the number of fellows selected for the Fellow-
3 ship Program each year. The Board shall select
4 qualified individuals to participate in the Fellowship
5 Program. In selecting the fellows, the Board should
6 ensure geographic representation to ensure region-
7 specific specialties are developed.

8 “(2) CRITERIA.—All fellows shall meet one of
9 the following criteria:

10 “(A) Have a conferred bachelors degree, or
11 equivalent degree, before the start of the Fel-
12 lowship period.

13 “(B) Be a student who is currently en-
14 rolled in a United States institution of higher
15 education completing an advanced degree in the
16 field of science, technology, engineering, or
17 mathematics or a field related to the mining in-
18 dustry.

19 “(C) Have had a conferred postdoctoral
20 degree during the 5-year period immediately
21 preceding the Fellowship period.

22 “(3) REQUIRED INTENT.—Upon completing the
23 Fellowship Program, each fellow shall demonstrate
24 their intent to seek employment in a mining profes-

1 sion that directly benefits the growth, progress, and
2 development of the United States mining industry—

3 “(A) in the United States Government; or

4 “(B) at a United States-based nongovern-
5 mental organization, academic institution, pri-
6 vate sector company, or other organization that
7 has been approved by the Bureau.

8 “(4) ELIGIBLE UNIVERSITIES.—United States
9 students shall attend universities approved by the
10 Bureau, in consultation with the Committee on For-
11 eign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on
12 Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives,
13 that have a mining program and are located in a
14 foreign country. To the extent practicable, the Bu-
15 reau should prioritize enrollment in higher education
16 mining programs in—

17 “(A) member countries in the Minerals Se-
18 curity Partnership; or

19 “(B) any additional countries identified by
20 the Bureau, in consultation with the congres-
21 sional committees referred to in this paragraph,
22 as containing sufficiently qualified mining pro-
23 grams .

24 “(5) OUTREACH.—To the extent practicable,
25 the Bureau shall conduct outreach at United States

1 undergraduate and graduate higher education insti-
2 tutions the Bureau determines are likely to produce
3 a range of qualified applicants to be sent abroad.

4 “(e) STRUCTURE.—

5 “(1) WORK PLAN.—To carry out the purposes
6 described in subsection (b)—

7 “(A) each fellow selected pursuant to sub-
8 section (d)(1) shall be encouraged to arrange
9 placement in a mining education program at an
10 eligible foreign university;

11 “(B) each fellow shall—

12 “(i) participate in advanced
13 coursework, research projects, and prac-
14 tical training opportunities, including in-
15 ternships, offered by the host institution;

16 “(ii) engage with faculty advisors and
17 industry partners to gain hands-on experi-
18 ence through internships, laboratory work,
19 and field studies relevant to the mining in-
20 dustry;

21 “(iii) serve as a cultural and academic
22 ambassador of the United States by fos-
23 tering mutual understanding within the
24 host country’s academic and professional
25 mining community;

1 “(iv) participate in professional devel-
2 opment activities, such as conferences,
3 workshops, and seminars, to expand knowl-
4 edge of global best practices in mining en-
5 gineering and related fields; and

6 “(v) build and strengthen networks
7 with international peers, faculty, and in-
8 dustry professionals to facilitate ongoing
9 collaboration and knowledge exchange; and

10 “(C) the Bureau shall, for each fellow, ap-
11 prove a work plan that identifies the target ob-
12 jectives for the fellow, including specific duties
13 and responsibilities relating to such objectives.

14 “(2) FELLOWSHIP PERIOD.—

15 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Each fellowship under
16 this section shall continue for a period deter-
17 mined by the Bureau, which, whenever feasible,
18 shall not be shorter than 1 year.

19 “(B) RENEWAL.—The Bureau may grant
20 a renewal for a second year, in consultation
21 with the relevant United States embassy or the
22 Fulbright Commission.

23 “(f) FELLOWSHIP AWARD.—The Bureau shall pro-
24 vide each fellow under this section with an allowance equal

1 to the amount needed for the fellow's reasonable costs dur-
2 ing the fellowship period, including—

3 “(1) mandatory university fees, including tui-
4 tion, associated with his or her studies;

5 “(2) living expenses, including housing, basic
6 food costs, and daily transportation;

7 “(3) essential textbooks and other academic
8 materials;

9 “(4) mandatory visa application, immigration
10 fees, and other essential pre-departure requirements;

11 “(5) relocation expenses, including travel by air
12 or by rail;

13 “(6) a research allowance, including essential
14 travel to field sites and laboratory work; and

15 “(7) other reasonable costs approved by the Bu-
16 reau.

17 “(g) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after
18 the completion of the Fellowship Program by the initial
19 cohort of fellows selected pursuant to subsection (d), and
20 annually thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit
21 a report to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
22 Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
23 House of Representatives that includes information re-
24 garding the implementation of the Fellowship Program,
25 including—

1 “(1) the demographics and geographical origins
2 of the cohort of fellows who completed a fellowship
3 during the reporting period;

4 “(2) a description of academic placements se-
5 lected and their relation to the development of the
6 United States region-specific specialties under the
7 Fellowship Program, including participant feedback
8 on program implementation and lessons learned; and

9 “(3) a plan for factoring lessons learned and
10 acquired skills based knowledge into future program-
11 ming.”.

12 **SEC. 5. VISITING MINING SCHOLARS PROGRAM.**

13 The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act
14 of 1961, as amended by sections 3 and 4, is further
15 amended by adding at the end the following:

16 **“SEC. 117. VISITING MINING SCHOLARS PROGRAM.**

17 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is authorized to be es-
18 tablished the Visiting Mining Scholars Program (referred
19 to in this section as the ‘Visiting Scholars Program’) with-
20 in the J. William Fulbright Educational Exchange Pro-
21 gram.

22 “(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Visiting Schol-
23 ars Program is to bring mining academics and profes-
24 sionals to the United States—

1 “(1) to build and expand United States mining
2 education programs at higher education institutions;

3 “(2) to bolster workforce development pro-
4 grams; and

5 “(3) to advance research and development ini-
6 tiatives in the mining industry and adjacent fields.

7 “(c) ADMINISTRATION.—The Bureau of Educational
8 and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State (referred
9 to in this section as the ‘Bureau’) shall administer the Vis-
10 iting Scholars Program in accordance with policy guide-
11 lines established by the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship
12 Board (referred to in this section as the ‘Board’), in con-
13 sultation with binational Fulbright Commissions, mining
14 industry leaders, higher education institutions, foreign
15 governments, and United States embassies in eligible
16 countries.

17 “(d) SELECTION OF VISITING MINING SCHOLARS.—

18 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall select
19 qualified individuals to participate in the Visiting
20 Scholars Program, who shall be foreign nationals—

21 “(A) currently employed as mining profes-
22 sionals, practitioners, or operators outside of
23 the United States; or

24 “(B) currently employed as academics
25 working at institutions of higher education in

1 foreign countries with mining education pro-
2 grams, as approved by a Fulbright Commission
3 or United States embassy, in consultation with
4 the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House
5 of Representatives and the Committee on For-
6 eign Relations of the Senate.

7 “(2) NUMBER OF FELLOWS.—The Bureau shall
8 determine the number of fellows selected each year,
9 which, whenever feasible, shall be not fewer than 10.

10 “(3) CRITEREIA.—Visiting mining scholars
11 shall be foreign nationals—

12 “(A) of a country in which an existing Ful-
13 bright Foreign Student Program operates; and

14 “(B) of a country that has expertise, spe-
15 cialized knowledge, or engages in practices that
16 could benefit the United States mining indus-
17 try.

18 “(4) PREFERRED COUNTRIES.—To the extent
19 practicable, the Board should prioritize selection of
20 visiting mining scholars who live or work in—

21 “(A) a member country in the Minerals Se-
22 curity Partnership; or

23 “(B) any additional country identified by
24 the Bureau, in consultation with the Committee
25 on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the

1 Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of
2 Representatives, as containing individuals who
3 have academic expertise, specialized knowledge,
4 or engage in practices that could benefit the
5 United States mining industry.

6 “(5) OUTREACH.—To the extent practicable,
7 the Bureau shall conduct outreach in coordination
8 with appropriate United States embassies, mining
9 industry leaders, and mining institutions abroad that
10 are likely to produce a range of qualified applicants
11 to come to the United States.

12 “(e) STRUCTURE.—

13 “(1) WORK PLAN.—To carry out the purposes
14 described in subsection (b)—

15 “(A) each individual selected pursuant to
16 subsection (d)(1), and who is coming to the
17 United States as a visiting mining scholar—

18 “(i) shall arrange placement in a
19 United States academic institution ap-
20 proved by the Bureau; and

21 “(ii) should—

22 “(I) consult with faculty mem-
23 bers to provide technical assistance on
24 how to develop or expand a mining

1 education program at the host institu-
2 tion of higher education;

3 “(II) assist in the development
4 and review of mining education cur-
5 ricula, including course syllabi, labora-
6 tory modules, and fieldwork compo-
7 nents;

8 “(III) participate in collaborative
9 research projects with faculty, stu-
10 dents, and third-party research insti-
11 tutions focusing on innovative mining
12 technologies, sustainable mining prac-
13 tices, and resource management;

14 “(IV) facilitate partnerships be-
15 tween the host institution and mining
16 organizations, government agencies,
17 and other institutions to foster aca-
18 demic exchange, research collabora-
19 tion, and workforce development;

20 “(V) mentor undergraduate and
21 graduate students interested in min-
22 ing education, offering guidance on
23 academic projects and career develop-
24 ment; and

1 “(VI) contribute to the develop-
2 ment of outreach programs aimed at
3 increasing awareness of the mining in-
4 dustry as a career path and to in-
5 crease awareness of the types of min-
6 ing professions available; and

7 “(B) the Bureau shall, for each scholar,
8 approve a work plan that identifies the target
9 objectives for the scholar, including specific du-
10 ties and responsibilities relating to such objec-
11 tives.

12 “(2) ELIGIBLE UNITED STATES INSTITU-
13 TIONS.—Visiting mining scholars shall be placed in
14 a higher education institution approved by the Bu-
15 reau that—

16 “(A) demonstrates a commitment to de-
17 velop or expand academic programs in the min-
18 ing industry;

19 “(B) possesses existing faculty expertise or
20 research activity in the mining industry or re-
21 lated extractive fields;

22 “(C) provides institutional support and re-
23 sources, such as laboratory facilities, field sites,
24 or equipment, relevant to mining education and
25 research, including in geology;

1 “(D) demonstrates a commitment to inte-
2 grate the visiting scholar into curriculum devel-
3 opment, faculty training, or workforce pipeline
4 initiatives in mining;

5 “(E) demonstrates a plan for sustaining
6 mining or critical mineral resources programs
7 beyond the duration of the visiting scholar’s
8 placement;

9 “(F) shows evidence of student interest or
10 regional workforce demand for mining edu-
11 cation programs or training; and

12 “(G) agrees to provide mentoring, adminis-
13 trative support, and opportunities for the vis-
14 iting scholar to engage with students, faculty,
15 and local industry.

16 “(3) SCHOLARSHIP PERIOD.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The duration of each
18 scholarship period under this section shall be
19 determined by the Bureau and shall, whenever
20 feasible, be not less than three months and not
21 more than one year.

22 “(B) EXCEPTIONS.—Any exception to the
23 duration of the scholarship period described in
24 subparagraph (A) shall be submitted by the vis-

1 iting mining scholar to and approved by the
2 Bureau before such exception takes effect.

3 “(f) SCHOLARSHIP AWARD.—The Bureau shall pro-
4 vide each visiting mining scholar under this section with
5 an allowance to cover the scholar’s reasonable costs of liv-
6 ing during the scholarship period.

7 “(g) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after
8 the completion of the Visiting Scholars Program by the
9 initial cohort of scholars selected pursuant to subsection
10 (d)(1), and annually thereafter, the Secretary of State
11 shall submit a report to the Committee on Foreign Rela-
12 tions of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs
13 of the House of Representatives that includes information
14 on the implementation of the Visiting Scholars Program,
15 including—

16 “(1) the demographics and geographical origins
17 of the cohort of scholars who completed a Visiting
18 Scholars Program during the reporting period;

19 “(2) the United States universities at which vis-
20 iting scholars were placed;

21 “(3) the foreign universities or other post-grad-
22 uate institutions from which the cohort of visiting
23 scholars were chosen;

24 “(4) a description of academic placements se-
25 lected under the Visiting Scholars Program, includ-

1 ing participant feedback on program implementation
2 and lessons learned; and

3 “(5) a plan for factoring lessons learned into
4 future programming.”.

5 **SEC. 6. TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO**
6 **THE MUTUAL EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL**
7 **EXCHANGE ACT OF 1961.**

8 The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act
9 of 1961 (Public Law 87–256; 22 U.S.C. 2451 et seq.) is
10 amended—

11 (1) in section 104(g) (22 U.S.C. 2454(g)), by
12 striking paragraph (5);

13 (2) in section 108A(a) (22 U.S.C. 2458a(a))—

14 (A) by striking “(1)” before Congress;

15 (B) by striking paragraph (2); and

16 (C) by redesignating subparagraphs (A),
17 (B), and (C) as paragraph (1), (2), and (3), re-
18 spectively;

19 (3) in section 112 (22 U.S.C. 2460)—

20 (A) in subsection (a)—

21 (i) in paragraph (9), by striking
22 “and” at the end;

23 (ii) in the first paragraph designated
24 as paragraph (10), by striking the period
25 at the end and inserting a semicolon;

1 (iii) in the second paragraph des-
2 ignated as paragraph (10)—

3 (I) by striking “(10)” and insert-
4 ing “(11)”; and

5 (II) by striking the period at the
6 end and inserting a semicolon; and

7 (iv) by adding at the end the fol-
8 lowing:

9 “(12) the Critical Mineral Mining Fellowship
10 Program established under section 116, which pro-
11 vides funding for studies, research, and international
12 exchange for students seeking or completing ad-
13 vanced degrees from United States higher education
14 institutions in self-arranged placements with univer-
15 sities with mining education programs in foreign
16 countries; and

17 “(13) the Visiting Mining Scholars Program es-
18 tablished under section 117, which provides funding
19 for international mining academics, practitioners,
20 professionals and operators in self-arranged place-
21 ments with universities in the United States.”; and

22 (B) in subsection (g)—

23 (i) by striking paragraph (2);

1 (ii) by redesignating paragraphs (3)
2 through (11) as paragraphs (2) through
3 (10), respectively; and

4 (iii) in paragraph (10), as redesign-
5 dated, by striking “paragraph (6)” and in-
6 serting “paragraph (5)”; and

7 (4) in section 115(d)(2) (22 U.S.C.
8 2465(d)(2))—

9 (A) by striking subparagraph (B);

10 (B) in subparagraph (A)—

11 (i) by striking “(A) IN GENERAL.—”;

12 and

13 (ii) by redesignating clauses (i) and

14 (ii) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), and

15 moving such clauses 2 ems to the left.

16 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

17 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Depart-
18 ment of State \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years
19 2026 through 2035 for the purpose of carrying out the
20 Critical Mineral Mining Fellowship Program and the Vis-
21 iting Mining Scholars Program established under sections
22 116 and 117 of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Ex-
23 change Act of 1961, as added by sections 4 and 5.

○