

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3604

To amend the Public Health Service Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out activities to establish, expand, and sustain a public health nursing workforce, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 8 (legislative day, JANUARY 7), 2026

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out activities to establish, expand, and sustain a public health nursing workforce, 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 “Public Health Nursing
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING WORKFORCE.**

2 Part E of title VII of the Public Health Service Act
3 (42 U.S.C. 294n et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
4 the following:

5 **“Subpart 4—Public Health Nursing Workforce**

6 **“SEC. 780. PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING WORKFORCE.**

7 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out ac-
8 tivities relating to establishing, expanding, and sustaining
9 a public health nursing workforce, including by making
10 grants to State, local, and territorial public health depart-
11 ments.

12 “(b) USE OF FUNDS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH DEPART-
13 MENTS.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The recipient of a grant
15 under subsection (a) shall use the grant funds for
16 the following:

17 “(A) Costs (including wages and benefits)
18 relating to the recruiting, hiring, and training
19 of licensed registered nurses to serve as public
20 health nurses—

21 “(i) who are employed by the State,
22 territorial, or local public health depart-
23 ment involved, particularly in medically un-
24 derserved areas; and

25 “(ii) who work in public health facili-
26 ties, including mobile health clinics and

1 acute care hospitals, or who provide home
2 visitation.

3 “(B) Costs of medical supplies, including
4 personal protective equipment, necessary to
5 carry out the activities described in subpara-
6 graph (A).

7 “(C) Administrative costs and activities re-
8 lating to grant activities.

9 “(2) SUBGRANTS.—The recipient of a grant
10 under subsection (a) may make subgrants to local
11 health departments to be used for the activities de-
12 scribed in paragraph (1).

13 “(c) PRIORITY.—In selecting recipients of grants
14 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to
15 applicants that—

16 “(1) propose to serve—

17 “(A) areas with populations that have a
18 high rate of chronic disease, infant mortality, or
19 maternal morbidity and mortality;

20 “(B) low-income populations, including
21 medically underserved populations (as defined
22 in section 330(b));

23 “(C) populations residing in health profes-
24 sional shortage areas (as defined in section
25 332(a));

1 “(D) populations residing in maternity
2 care health professional target areas identified
3 under section 332(k); or

4 “(E) rural or traditionally underserved
5 populations;

6 “(2) demonstrate a plan for providing services,
7 to the maximum extent practicable, in the language
8 and cultural context more appropriate to individuals
9 expected to be served by the program; and

10 “(3) have a documented collective bargaining
11 agreement with 1 or more labor organizations rep-
12 resenting employees of the applicant or have an ex-
13 plicit policy not to interfere with the rights of em-
14 ployees of the applicant under section 7 of the Na-
15 tional Labor Relations Act.

16 “(d) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—The recipient of
17 a grant under subsection (a) shall agree to maintain ex-
18 penditures of non-Federal amounts for activities described
19 in subsection (b) at a level that is not less than the level
20 of such expenditures maintained by the recipient for the
21 fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the recipient
22 receives such a grant.

23 “(e) PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE DEFINED.—In this
24 section, the term ‘public health nurse’ means a nurse pro-
25 viding health care services and education regarding pre-

1 ventive health, nutrition, infectious diseases, chronic dis-
2 ease management, and maternal health, prenatal, and
3 postpartum care in order to improve maternal and infant
4 health outcomes.

5 “(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
6 is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
7 out this section \$5,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years
8 2026 through 2035.”.

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