

Democratic Amendment to H.R. 3990

Summary

The Democratic substitute amendment strikes all of H.R. 3990 and updates current law Title II, Title IV, and Part D of Title V. This amendment ensures that there are effective and supported teachers in every classroom; that students have access to a well-rounded education; and that students have the non-academic supports they need to come to class ready to learn and achieve.

Title II– Great Teachers and Leaders

The Democratic Amendment updates current law to better support students, teachers and school leaders. The rewrite of Title II includes a formula grant to states and local education agencies, a competitive grant to support teacher and school leader innovation, and restores and updates Title II of the Higher Education Act to improve pre-service training for teachers.

Title II, Part A, the formula to States and LEAs, focuses on three major areas:

- supporting quality teacher and school leader evaluations and targeted professional development;
- improving supports and working conditions for educators; and
- improving equitable distribution of effective teachers and school leaders to the students that need them most.

The amendment requires States to establish teacher and principal evaluations systems to ensure teachers and leaders targeted support and opportunities to improve and to improve student learning.

The system is required to be developed with teachers and school leaders. It includes multiple measures of student achievement and classroom practice. It requires that teachers and leaders be given targeted supports and time to improve. The system requires that all participants are trained in the evaluation system and its use. The program will provide funding to support the evaluations systems being developed by dozens of States through the NCLB flexibility being offered by the Department of Education. Additionally, the collective bargaining rights and privacy of teachers and school leaders are protected.

The amendment also requires local education agencies to develop and implement an assessment of educator supports and working conditions to ensure teachers and school leaders are given the best opportunity to succeed with students. The assessment would look at educator supports, such as access to quality professional development and instructional materials, timely access to data, professional growth opportunities, and strong instructional leadership. It would also look at working conditions such as school climate and safety and opportunities to collaborate. The LEA would develop a plan to address shortfalls and annually report on that plan. Additionally, the assessment and corresponding plan would be developed with teachers and school leaders.

The amendment requires states and districts to address the equitable distribution of effective teachers and school leaders to ensure they reach the students that need them most. States and LEAs are required to develop and implement a plan to, over time, ensure students are taught and schools are led by effective teachers and school leaders at equal rates across an LEA.

The amendment also requires the state to establish a data system link between LEAs and pre-service programs to support data sharing. Such a link would provide aggregated student performance information back to schools of education and other pre-service programs to support their improvement.

Unlike the Republican bill, this improves current law:

- The amendment also supports induction and mentoring and requires states to address large class sizes in kindergarten through 3rd grade, with a focus on the poorest schools.
- The Democratic Amendment supports high quality, comprehensive teacher and school leader evaluations that include multiple measures of student learning and classroom practice and that are tied directly to targeted support.
- H.R. 3990 alters the Title II formula to support fewer poor schools. The Democratic Amendment retains the current formula and focus on the neediest schools.

- H.R. 3990 does not support quality professional development or take into consideration the working conditions of teachers and leaders, including school safety, and creating an arbitrary cap on class size despite research.
- H.R. 3990 does not support access to effective teachers for all students.
- H.R. 3990 strikes the Highly Qualified Teacher definition, dismantling efforts to ensure students see teachers who meet certain standards at a minimum to teach.
- H.R. 3990 and current law do not support data sharing between LEAs and pre-service programs to support the improvement of teacher training.

Title II, Part B, supports the Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund, a competitive grant to States and LEAs. The grant would support partnerships between States, high-need LEAs and partnerships between institutions of higher education, education service agencies, and other non-profit organizations. The grants are to support innovative practices to support teachers and school leaders and improve student achievement.

Title II, Part C, restores the Title II of the Higher Education Act. The program is updated to ensure teachers are prepared to teach students to new college and career ready standards. The competition would be opened to include programs that provide alternative routes to State certification if they meet the same criteria as the current eligible entities. The intention in opening up the competition is to ensure the highest quality programs can be selected.

Unlike the Republican bill, this improves current law:

- The Democratic amendment restores the Title II of Higher Education Program to maintain federal support for high quality teacher training. The Amendment improves upon current law by opening up the competition to programs that provide alternative routes to certification.

Title IV – Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students

H.R. 3990 strikes all programs under current law Title IV, Part A and makes these programs an allowable use of funds under the Local Academic Flexible block grant. The Democratic substitute amendment eliminates the Republican block grant, strikes all of current law under Title IV, and

replaces it with programs to support and strengthen before, after, and summer school programs, expanded learning time activities, programs to support the non-academic needs of students, and the PIRCs. All of the grant programs included in the Democratic substitute amendment prioritize schools in need of improvement as well as persistently low-achieving schools, and schools with the highest number or percentage of students in poverty.

Title IV, Part A provides funding for after school programs and expanded learning time. The Democratic amendment provides formula funding to states, and competitive grants to partnerships of local educational agencies and community-based organizations (either of which may be lead fiscal agents). Decisions are made at the local level on whether to use the funds for before, after, or summer school programs, or expanded learning time activities based on an assessment of needs in the schools that will be served.

- Unlike the Republican bill, this improves current law by:
 - Creating a separate funding stream dedicated to the before, after, and summer school programs, and expanded learning time activities instead of forcing local educational agencies to make difficult, and sometimes political decisions about what to fund through a block grant.
 - Allowing local level flexibility to determine the programs that best fit the needs of students, addressing areas of concern including student safety, and individual learning needs. The funds could also increase teacher planning time and provide time for a truly well-rounded education.

Title IV, Part B provides funding to address the non-academic needs of students. The Democratic amendment provides formula funding to states, and competitive grants to local educational agencies in partnership with one or more community-based organizations. Local educational agencies are required to conduct a needs assessment in several key areas, including school safety, the prevalence of substance abuse, the unmet needs of youth in danger of juvenile delinquency and gang activity, the need for specialized instructional support personnel, and the prevalence of student health needs (including mental health and nutrition). Grant funds would be

used to address the identified needs and the eligible entity would be held accountable for the academic and non-academic progress of students.

The amendment also requires states to develop comprehensive school safety plans which must include plans to address bullying and harassment; evidence-based and promising practices to address juvenile delinquency and gang activity; school-sponsored, off-premises, overnight field trips, and crisis and emergency management. These plans must be adopted by local educational agencies within 5 years.

- Unlike the Republican bill, this improves current law by:
 - Creating a separate funding stream to address the non-academic needs of students. H.R. 3990 forces local educational agencies to make difficult decisions about what to fund and what not to fund through a block grant. Under the Republican bill, there is no guarantee that student’s safety, health, mental health, nutritional or other essential needs would be met under the Republican bills.
 - Ensuring that states and districts have comprehensive plans in place to deal with student safety needs. H.R. 3990 does nothing to address the very prevalent problems facing students such as bullying and harassment.
 - Consolidating numerous small grant programs, reducing administrative burden and bureaucracy on States and local educational agencies, and making it easier for State and local educational agencies to compete for and access funds.

Title IV, Part C restores and improves Parent Information Resource Centers (PIRCS). The Democratic amendment re-defines the PIRCs’ role to providing capacity-building, training, and technical assistance to State educational agencies and local educational agencies, in order to scale up innovative practices and reach more families, particular those in high-need communities. The amendment renames PIRCs as “Statewide Family Engagement Centers” (SFECs) to better reflect their new role. H.R. 3990 also contains this provision.

- This improves current law by: .

- Improving the ability of PIRCs to provide technical assistance to State educational agencies and local educational agencies to more effectively engage parents in the education of their children.

Title V, Part D – A Well Rounded Education

The Democratic amendment strikes current law Title V, Part D and replaces it with programs dedicated to improving student achievement in STEM subjects, literacy, and other subject matters leading to a well-rounded education. The amendment also provides support for student, teacher, and leader use of technology, and using technology to redesign curricula.

Subpart 1 creates a comprehensive program for STEM education from preschool through grade 12. If the STEM program is funded above \$250 million, funds are provided by formula to states; if funding is below \$250 million, funds are competitive to states. If grants to states are competitive, the Secretary may award a capacity-building grant to any state that does not win an implementation grant. States provide competitive grants to the local level.

Local educational agencies or a consortium of local educational agencies must conduct a needs assessment to determine how to use the STEM grant, including for professional development, curriculum, assessments, improving school science labs, and other academic supports. A special focus is required on students who are traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields such as women and minorities. Funds may be used for mathematics, statistics, science, computer science, or engineering.

The Democratic Substitute also creates a STEM Master Teacher Corps that will attract, improve, and retain teachers who teach STEM subject in high need schools.

- Unlike the Republican bill, this improves current law by:
 - Creating a separate funding stream to address STEM education. H.R. 3990 does not specifically fund STEM education and forces local educational agencies to make difficult decisions about what to fund and what not to fund through a block grant.

There is no guarantee that the country's STEM educational needs would be met under the Republican bills.

- Strengthening the provisions formerly authorized under the current law program Mathematics and Science Partnerships.

Subpart 2 creates a comprehensive literacy program for students from preschool through grade 12. If the literacy program is funded above \$250 million, funds are provided by formula to states; if funding is below \$250 million, funds are competitive to states. The Secretary may also award planning grants to states to review current reading, writing, and other literacy programs, form a literacy leadership team, and create a comprehensive literacy plan.

States provide competitive grants to the local level.

- Ten percent of grant funds are used for state and local programs and activities for children from preschool through kindergarten.
- Forty percent of funds are used for state and local programs and activities for students from kindergarten through grade 5.
- Forty percent of funds are used for state and local programs and activities for students from grade 5 through grade 12.

Funds must be used to implement the literacy plans and provide support for professional development, curriculum, assessments and other academic supports.

- Unlike the Republican bill, this improves current law by:
 - Creating a separate funding stream to address literacy education. H.R. 3990 provides no specific funding for literacy programs and forces local educational agencies to make difficult decisions about what to fund and what not to fund through a block grant. There is no guarantee that student's literacy needs would be met under the Republican bills

- Consolidating numerous small grant programs to reduce administrative burden and bureaucracy and make it easier for State and local educational agencies to compete for and access funds

Subpart 3 supports local delivery of a well-rounded education to students . The amendment provides funding for State and local educational agencies, or educational service agencies in partnership with Institutes of Higher Education, nonprofit organizations, libraries, or museums to compete for grants in a variety of important subject matter areas.

- 45% of funds are reserved for American History programs, Civic Education programs, and Geography programs.
- 10% of funds are reserved for Economic, Entrepreneurship, and Financial Literacy Education programs.
- 15% of funds are reserved for Foreign Languages programs.
- 15% of funds are reserved for Arts programs.
- 10% of funds are reserved for Javits Gifted and Talented programs.

Grant funds may be used for professional development, curriculum, assessments, and other academic supports.

This subpart also provides 5 percent of funds for a national competition for nonprofit organizations with demonstrated expertise, such as the National Writing Project, Ready to Learn, Reach Out and Read, and others. Grant funds would also be used for professional development, curriculum, assessments, and other academic supports.

- Unlike the Republican bill, this improves current law by:
 - Creating a separate funding stream to provide students with a diverse education. H.R. 3990 provides no specific funding for these important programs and forces local educational agencies to make difficult decisions about what to fund and what not to fund through a block grant. Schools would lack support for subjects outside of math and science under the Republican bills. The Republican bills not protect against a narrowing of the curriculum.

- Consolidating numerous small grant programs reduces administrative burden and bureaucracy to make it easier for State and local educational agencies to compete for and access funds.

Subpart 4 creates a comprehensive program to support education technology. The program provides formula grants to States, and then States compete those funds to award subgrants to local educational agencies or consortium of local educational agencies.

LEAs that receive funds from this program will use the funds for professional development for teachers, paraprofessionals, library and media personnel, and administrators in the effective use of technology tools and digital resources to deliver instruction, curriculum and school/classroom management, including for classroom teachers to assess, support and address student learning needs. Funds will also be used to acquire and effectively implement technology tools, and applications consistent with the principles of universal design for learning and other resources.

- Unlike the Republican bill, this improves current law by:
 - Restoring support for education technology that was eliminated in H.R. 3990 and updating the education technology program.

The amendment also creates a National Online Education Quality Board to develop and disseminate standards of quality and best practices for online education; and to support the dissemination of best practices and provide teacher training and professional development in online education.