

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2615

To establish a program to promote child literacy by making books available through early learning and other child care programs, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 23, 2000

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mrs. HUTCHISON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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## A BILL

To establish a program to promote child literacy by making books available through early learning and other child care 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Book Stamp Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following:

7 (1) Literacy is fundamental to all learning.

8 (2) Between 40 and 60 percent of the Nation’s  
9 children do not read at grade level, particularly chil-

1       dren in families or school districts that are chal-  
2       lenged by significant financial or social instability.

3               (3) Increased investments in child literacy are  
4       needed to improve opportunities for children and the  
5       efficacy of the Nation’s education investments.

6               (4) Increasing access to books in the home is  
7       an important means of improving child literacy,  
8       which can be accomplished nationally at modest cost.

9               (5) Effective channels for book distribution al-  
10      ready exist through child care providers.

11 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

12       In this Act:

13               (1) EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM.—The term  
14       “early learning”, used with respect to a program,  
15       means a program of activities designed to facilitate  
16       development of cognitive, language, motor, and so-  
17       cial-emotional skills in children under age 6 as a  
18       means of enabling the children to enter school ready  
19       to learn, such as a Head Start or Early Head Start  
20       program carried out under the Head Start Act (42  
21       U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), or a State pre-kindergarten  
22       program.

23               (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
24       the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

1           (3) STATE.—The term “State” means the 50  
2 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth  
3 of Puerto Rico, Guam, the United States Virgin Is-  
4 lands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of  
5 the Northern Mariana Islands.

6           (4) STATE AGENCY.—The term “State agency”  
7 means an agency designated under section 658D of  
8 the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of  
9 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858b).

10 **SEC. 4. GRANTS TO STATE AGENCIES.**

11       (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary  
12 shall establish and carry out a program to promote child  
13 literacy and improve children’s access to books at home  
14 and in early learning and other child care programs, by  
15 making books available through early learning and other  
16 child care programs.

17       (b) GRANTS.—

18           (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program,  
19 the Secretary shall make grants to State agencies  
20 from allotments determined under paragraph (2).

21           (2) ALLOTMENTS.—For each fiscal year, the  
22 Secretary shall allot to each State an amount that  
23 bears the same ratio to the total of the available  
24 funds for the fiscal year as the amount the State re-  
25 ceives under section 6580(b) of the Child Care and

1 Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.  
2 9858m(b)) for the fiscal year bears to the total  
3 amount received by all States under that section for  
4 the fiscal year.

5 (c) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive an allot-  
6 ment under this section, a State shall submit an applica-  
7 tion to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and  
8 containing such information as the Secretary may require.

9 (d) ACCOUNTABILITY.—The provisions of sections  
10 658I(b) and 658K(b) of the Child Care and Development  
11 Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858g(b), 9858i(b))  
12 shall apply to States receiving grants under this Act, ex-  
13 cept that references in those sections—

14 (1) to a subchapter shall be considered to be  
15 references to this Act; and

16 (2) to a plan or application shall be considered  
17 to be references to an application submitted under  
18 subsection (c).

19 (e) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “available  
20 funds”, used with respect to a fiscal year, means the total  
21 of—

22 (1) the funds made available under section  
23 416(c)(1) of title 39, United States Code for the fis-  
24 cal year; and

1           (2) the amounts appropriated under section 9  
2           for the fiscal year.

3 **SEC. 5. CONTRACTS TO CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND**  
4                                   **REFERRAL AGENCIES.**

5           A State agency that receives a grant under section  
6 4 shall use funds made available through the grant to  
7 enter into contracts with local child care resource and re-  
8 ferral agencies to carry out the activities described in sec-  
9 tion 6. The State agency may reserve not more than 3  
10 percent of the funds made available through the grant to  
11 support a public awareness campaign relating to the ac-  
12 tivities.

13 **SEC. 6. USE OF FUNDS.**

14           (a) **ACTIVITIES.—**

15           (1) **BOOK PAYMENTS FOR ELIGIBLE PRO-**  
16 **VIDERS.—**A child care resource and referral agency  
17 that receives a contract under section 5 shall use the  
18 funds made available through the grant to provide  
19 payments for eligible early learning program and  
20 other child care providers, on the basis of local  
21 needs, to enable the providers to make books avail-  
22 able, to promote child literacy and improve chil-  
23 dren's access to books at home and in early learning  
24 and other child care programs.

1           (2) ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS.—To be eligible to re-  
2           ceive a payment under paragraph (1), a provider  
3           shall—

4                   (A)(i) be a center-based child care pro-  
5                   vider, a group home child care provider, or a  
6                   family child care provider, described in section  
7                   658P(5)(A) of the Child Care and Development  
8                   Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.  
9                   9858n(5)(A)); or

10                   (ii) be a Head Start agency designated  
11                   under section 641 of the Head Start Act (42  
12                   U.S.C. 9836), an entity that receives assistance  
13                   under section 645A of such Act to carry out an  
14                   Early Head Start program or another provider  
15                   of an early learning program; and

16                   (B) provide services in an area where chil-  
17                   dren face high risks of literacy difficulties, as  
18                   defined by the Secretary.

19           (b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—A child care resource and  
20           referral agency that receives a contract under section 5  
21           to provide payments to eligible providers shall—

22                   (1) consult with local individuals and organiza-  
23                   tions concerned with early literacy (including parents  
24                   and organizations carrying out the Reach Out and

1 Read, First Book, and Reading Is Fundamental pro-  
2 grams) regarding local book distribution needs;

3 (2) make reasonable efforts to learn public de-  
4 mographic and other information about local fami-  
5 lies and child literacy programs carried out by the  
6 eligible providers, as needed to inform the agency's  
7 decisions as the agency carries out the contract;

8 (3) coordinate local orders of the books made  
9 available under this Act;

10 (4) distribute, to each eligible provider that re-  
11 ceives a payment under this Act, not fewer than 1  
12 book every 6 months for each child served by the  
13 provider for more than 3 of the preceding 6 months;

14 (5) use not more than 5 percent of the funds  
15 made available through the contract to provide train-  
16 ing and technical assistance to the eligible providers  
17 on the effective use of books with young children at  
18 different stages of development; and

19 (6) be a training resource for eligible providers  
20 that want to offer parent workshops on developing  
21 reading readiness.

22 (c) DISCOUNTS.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Federal funds made avail-  
24 able under this Act for the purchase of books may  
25 only be used to purchase books on the same terms

1 as are customarily available in the book industry to  
2 entities carrying out nonprofit bulk book purchase  
3 and distribution programs.

4 (2) TERMS.—An entity offering books for pur-  
5 chase under this Act shall be present to have met  
6 the requirements of paragraph (1), absent contrary  
7 evidence, if the terms include a discount of 43 per-  
8 cent off the catalogue price of the books, with no ad-  
9 ditional charge for shipping and handling of the  
10 books.

11 (d) ADMINISTRATION.—The child care resource and  
12 referral agency may not use more than 6 percent of the  
13 funds made available through the contract for administra-  
14 tive costs.

15 **SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

16 Not later than 2 years of the date of enactment of  
17 this Act, the Secretary shall prepare and submit to Con-  
18 gress a report on the implementation of the activities car-  
19 ried out under this Act.

20 **SEC. 8. SPECIAL POSTAGE STAMPS FOR CHILD LITERACY.**

21 Chapter 4 of title 39, United States Code is amended  
22 by adding at the end the following:

23 **“§ 416. Special postage stamps for child literacy**

24 “(a) In order to afford the public a convenient way  
25 to contribute to funding for child literacy, the Postal Serv-

1 ice shall establish a special rate of postage for first-class  
2 mail under this section. The stamps that bear the special  
3 rate of postage shall promote childhood literacy and shall,  
4 to the extent practicable, contain an image relating to a  
5 character in a children’s book or cartoon.

6 “(b)(1) The rate of postage established under this  
7 section—

8 “(A) shall be equal to the regular first-class  
9 rate of postage, plus a differential of not to exceed  
10 25 percent;

11 “(B) shall be set by the Governors in accord-  
12 ance with such procedures as the Governors shall by  
13 regulation prescribe (in lieu of the procedures de-  
14 scribed in chapter 36); and

15 “(C) shall be offered as an alternative to the  
16 regular first-class rate of postage.

17 “(2) The use of the special rate of postage established  
18 under this section shall be voluntary on the part of postal  
19 patrons.

20 “(c)(1) Of the amounts becoming available for child  
21 literacy pursuant to this section, the Postal Service shall  
22 pay 100 percent to the Department of Health and Human  
23 Services.

24 “(2) Payments made under this subsection to the De-  
25 partment shall be made under such arrangements as the

1 Postal Service shall by mutual agreement with such De-  
2 partment establish in order to carry out the objectives of  
3 this section, except that, under those arrangements, pay-  
4 ments to such agency shall be made at least twice a year.

5 “(3) In this section, the term ‘amounts becoming  
6 available for child literacy pursuant to this section’  
7 means—

8 “(A) the total amounts received by the Postal  
9 Service that the Postal Service would not have re-  
10 ceived but for the enactment of this section; reduced  
11 by

12 “(B) an amount sufficient to cover reasonable  
13 costs incurred by the Postal Service in carrying out  
14 this section, including costs attributable to the print-  
15 ing, sale, and distribution of stamps under this sec-  
16 tion,

17 as determined by the Postal Service under regulations that  
18 the Postal Service shall prescribe.

19 “(d) It is the sense of Congress that nothing in this  
20 section should—

21 “(1) directly or indirectly cause a net decrease  
22 in total funds received by the Department of Health  
23 and Human Services, or any other agency of the  
24 Government (or any component or program of the  
25 Government), below the level that would otherwise

1 have been received but for the enactment of this sec-  
2 tion; or

3 “(2) affect regular first-class rates of postage  
4 or any other regular rates of postage.

5 “(e) Special postage stamps made available under  
6 this section shall be made available to the public beginning  
7 on such date as the Postal Service shall by regulation pre-  
8 scribe, but in no event later than 12 months after the date  
9 of enactment of this section.

10 “(f) The Postmaster General shall include in each re-  
11 port provided under section 2402, with respect to any pe-  
12 riod during any portion of which this section is in effect,  
13 information concerning the operation of this section, ex-  
14 cept that, at a minimum, each report shall include infor-  
15 mation on—

16 “(1) the total amounts described in subsection  
17 (c)(3)(A) that were received by the Postal Service  
18 during the period covered by such report; and

19 “(2) of the amounts described in paragraph (1),  
20 how much (in the aggregate and by category) was  
21 required for the purposes described in subsection  
22 (c)(3)(B).

23 “(g) This section shall cease to be effective at the  
24 end of the 2-year period beginning on the date on which

1 special postage stamps made available under this section  
2 are first made available to the public.”.

3 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4       There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
5 this Act \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2001 through  
6 2005.

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