

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1036

To provide assistance for rural school districts, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 16, 2005

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

A BILL

To provide assistance for rural school districts, 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 “Rural Teacher Reten-
5 tion Act of 2005”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) More than 8,000,000 children, representing
9 21 percent of all public school children in the United
10 States, attend public schools in rural areas.

1 (2) There are 24,123 public schools in rural
2 areas of the United States, representing 31 percent
3 of all public schools.

4 (3) More than 400,000 educators, or 31 percent
5 of all public school teachers, teach in rural schools.

6 (4) Rural school teachers earn approximately
7 14 percent less than their counterparts in other re-
8 gions.

9 (5) Despite lower salaries, rural school teachers
10 typically teach multiple subjects and perform their
11 jobs with fewer resources than their counterparts in
12 other regions.

13 (6) One of the most critical challenges facing
14 rural school districts is in attracting and retaining
15 qualified teachers.

16 (7) Rural school districts tend to have higher
17 teacher turnover rates than school districts in other
18 regions.

19 (8) High teacher turnover has a negative im-
20 pact on student performance, school district per-
21 formance, and the ability of teachers to become
22 highly qualified.

23 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

24 In this Act:

1 (1) RURAL LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—

2 The term “rural local educational agency” means a
3 local educational agency that—

4 (A) is described in section 6211(b) or
5 6221(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary
6 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7345(b) and
7 7351(b)(1)); and

8 (B) has experienced a teacher turnover
9 rate of not less than 5 percent of all the teach-
10 ers teaching in schools served by the agency in
11 any of the 3 years preceding the date of enact-
12 ment of this Act.

13 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
14 the Secretary of Education.

15 **SEC. 4. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—From funds appropriated under
17 section 5, the Secretary shall make an allotment to each
18 rural local educational agency having an application ap-
19 proved under subsection (b) according to a formula based
20 on the number of students in average daily attendance (as
21 defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary
22 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801)) in the schools
23 served by the rural local educational agency.

24 (b) APPLICATION.—A rural local educational agency
25 that desires to receive an allotment under subsection (a)

1 shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time,
2 in such manner, and accompanied by such information as
3 the Secretary may require.

4 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—A rural local educational
6 agency that receives an allotment under this section
7 shall use the funds for the following:

8 (A) Provide one-time signing bonuses of
9 not more than \$2,000 to teachers who com-
10 mence employment with the rural local edu-
11 cational agency on or after the date of enact-
12 ment of this Act.

13 (B) Provide bonuses of not more than
14 \$3,000 to qualified teachers who work in the
15 rural local educational agency for not less than
16 3 consecutive years (except as provided in para-
17 graph (2)).

18 (2) EXCEPTION FROM CONSECUTIVE SERV-
19 ICE.—The 3 year period of service working in the
20 rural local educational agency provided under para-
21 graph (1)(B) may be nonconsecutive if the break in
22 service is due to the qualified teacher taking leave
23 from the rural local educational agency and such
24 leave is—

1 (A) in compliance with the Family and
2 Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2611);
3 or

4 (B) due to the qualified teacher being
5 called or ordered to active duty as a member of
6 the National Guard or other reserve component
7 of the Armed Forces of the United States, or
8 a member of such Armed Forces in a retired
9 status.

10 (3) CONSIDERATION.—In determining the pro-
11 vision of bonuses under paragraph (1), a rural local
12 educational agency shall consider such factors as the
13 need for teachers in certain subjects, the value that
14 a teacher brings to the agency, teacher performance
15 and qualifications, and the unique needs of the agen-
16 cy.

17 (4) ONLY ONE BONUS IN ONE YEAR.—A teach-
18 er may receive only 1 bonus pursuant to this Act
19 during a calendar year.

20 (d) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out this
21 section as a pilot program for a 5-year period.

22 (e) RELATION TO OTHER FEDERAL EDUCATION
23 PROGRAMS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law,
24 nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect the eligi-
25 bility for assistance or the amount of assistance otherwise

1 available under any other Federal education program for
2 a rural local educational agency that receives an allotment
3 under this section or a teacher who receives a bonus pur-
4 suant to this section.

5 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

6 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
7 this Act \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2006 and such sums
8 as may be necessary for fiscal year 2007 and 2008.

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