

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1787

To conduct 1 or more higher education and career readiness demonstration projects for rural, low-income students.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 13, 2007

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. SPECTER, and Mr. SANDERS) 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 conduct 1 or more higher education and career readiness demonstration projects for rural, low-income students.

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 Students Col-  
5 lege, Career, and Community Readiness Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) roughly 1 in 4 public schools are located in  
9 rural America, accounting for 14.5 percent of total  
10 public school enrollment;

1           (2) rural boys and girls demonstrate lower edu-  
2           cational aspirations than their urban and suburban  
3           peers;

4           (3) fewer than 1 in 7 rural residents have ob-  
5           tained a 4-year baccalaureate degree, compared with  
6           nearly 1 in 4 metropolitan area residents;

7           (4) roughly half of rural secondary school stu-  
8           dents live in counties that have no 4-year institu-  
9           tions of higher education;

10          (5) there are major gaps in substantive re-  
11          search about effective rural education strategies;

12          (6) rural economic development is a continuing  
13          effort supported by the Federal Government, and  
14          rural schools can be important engines for economic  
15          development and long-term community and regional  
16          growth;

17          (7) one of the best ways to address the needs  
18          of students in rural communities is to help young  
19          people finish secondary school and attend college by  
20          providing programs that promote higher education  
21          throughout childhood and adolescence, and sup-  
22          porting programs that expose young people to the  
23          world of careers; and

1           (8) effective rural policy requires an emphasis  
2           on the development of human capital through edu-  
3           cation.

4 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

5           The purpose of this Act is to conduct a demonstration  
6           project to improve the educational and career outcomes  
7           of rural, low-income students in grades 7 through 12 that  
8           will seek to—

9           (1) improve the academic motivation and per-  
10          formance of rural students;

11          (2) improve student academic success in rural  
12          schools, including with respect to performance on  
13          statewide assessments;

14          (3) improve secondary school graduation rates  
15          in rural schools;

16          (4) increase the number of rural students en-  
17          gaged in rigorous, college-preparatory coursework;

18          (5) increase the number of rural students tak-  
19          ing college entrance examinations, such as the SATs  
20          or ACTs;

21          (6) increase the rates among rural students of  
22          application to institutions of higher education, en-  
23          rollment in such institutions, and institution of high-  
24          er education program completion;

1           (7) prepare rural students to become the next  
2           generation of leaders in their States and commu-  
3           nities;

4           (8) complement Federal and State efforts to  
5           build the State and local workforce and economy;  
6           and

7           (9) increase the number of people within rural  
8           communities who are able to meet the workforce  
9           needs of the local community and enhance the State,  
10          local, and regional economies.

11 **SEC. 4. DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.**

12          (a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From amounts appro-  
13          priated under section 9, the Secretary shall award grants  
14          to not more than 2 non-profit entities to enable the enti-  
15          ties to carry out the activities described in section 5 in  
16          rural schools and rural local educational agencies.

17          (b) APPLICATION.—A non-profit entity desiring to re-  
18          ceive a grant under this section shall submit an application  
19          to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and con-  
20          taining such information as the Secretary may require.

21          (c) SELECTION BASIS.—In awarding grants under  
22          this Act, the Secretary shall give priority to a non-profit  
23          entity that has—

24                  (1) existing capacity to implement program ele-  
25                  ments with the rigor called for in this Act;

1           (2) history and experience in working with rural  
2 schools and supporting student achievement goals;

3           (3) organizational capacity to successfully im-  
4 plement the demonstration project; and

5           (4) capacity and commitment to serve rural  
6 schools that have student populations with histori-  
7 cally low rates of secondary school graduation, insti-  
8 tution of higher education enrollment, or institution  
9 of higher education program completion.

10 (d) AMOUNT AND DURATION OF GRANTS.—

11           (1) AMOUNT; DURATION.—Each grant awarded  
12 by the Secretary under this Act shall be in an  
13 amount of not less than \$2,500,000 for each fiscal  
14 year of the grant period, and shall be awarded for  
15 a period of 6 years, in order to enable cohorts of  
16 students in grade 7 to participate in the demonstra-  
17 tion project under this Act for 6 consecutive years  
18 in the grant.

19           (2) USE OF GRANT FUNDS FOR EVALUATION.—  
20 Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a non-profit entity  
21 receiving a grant under this Act may use remaining  
22 grant funds after the grant period has expired in  
23 order to carry out the evaluation required under sec-  
24 tion 6 during the 3-year period immediately fol-  
25 lowing the last year of the grant period.

1 **SEC. 5. PROGRAM OPERATIONS.**

2 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—A non-profit entity re-  
3 ceiving a grant under this Act shall develop and carry out  
4 a rural school-based, institution of higher education prepa-  
5 ration and career exploration demonstration project  
6 through which the non-profit entity shall—

7 (1)(A) in the case of an entity receiving a grant  
8 of \$5,000,000 or more per year—

9 (i) serve a minimum of 40 rural schools  
10 and 7,500 students; and

11 (ii) serve rural schools in not fewer than 3  
12 geographic regions of the United States (such  
13 as the Southwest, Midwest, Southeast, North-  
14 east, or Northwest regions); or

15 (B) in the case of an entity receiving a grant  
16 of less than \$5,000,000 per year—

17 (i) serve a minimum of 20 rural schools  
18 and 3,000 students; and

19 (ii) serve rural schools in not fewer than 2  
20 such geographic regions;

21 (2) in selecting rural schools to participate in  
22 the project—

23 (A) collectively reach diverse racial and  
24 ethnic student populations; and

25 (B) ensure a sufficient participation of stu-  
26 dents in both grade 7 and grade 9 cohorts, as

1 described in paragraph (4), in order to allow for  
2 a full measure of the project's impact as both  
3 a 6-year program and a 4-year program;

4 (3) partner with rural local educational agencies  
5 and rural schools to carry out the activities under  
6 this subsection, and enter into a written agreement  
7 with each participating local educational agency or  
8 rural school in which—

9 (A) the entity agrees to carry out the ac-  
10 tivities described in paragraph (5) for the co-  
11 horts described in paragraph (4) at the identi-  
12 fied rural school; and

13 (B) the rural local educational agency or  
14 rural school agrees—

15 (i) to allow the entity access to stu-  
16 dents in the cohorts during the school day  
17 for the purposes of administering the dem-  
18 onstration project; and

19 (ii) to cooperate in the project evalua-  
20 tion, including the collection and sharing of  
21 data; and

22 (4) for each rural school with which the entity  
23 enters into a written agreement—

24 (A) identify the cohort of students who will  
25 be entering grade 7 in the first year of the

1 grant under this Act, and serves such students  
2 for 6 consecutive years; or

3 (B) identify the cohort of students who will  
4 be entering grade 9 in the first year of the  
5 grant under this Act, and serves such students  
6 for 4 consecutive years;

7 (5) provide participating students in a cohort at  
8 a partnering rural school with a program that—

9 (A) includes approximately 25 hours per  
10 grade of program workshops during the school  
11 day over the course of grades 7 through 12 or,  
12 in the case of a grade 9 cohort, grades 9  
13 through 12, to provide services including—

14 (i) providing education planning to  
15 the students;

16 (ii) providing information for the stu-  
17 dents about the opportunities for and the  
18 importance of higher education and post-  
19 secondary training;

20 (iii) developing career awareness in  
21 the students;

22 (iv) building the students' career,  
23 leadership, and life skills;

24 (v) building awareness in the students  
25 of the State's future labor needs and the

1 importance of young people to the State's  
2 economy, and coordinating with the State's  
3 efforts to develop the State's workforce  
4 and economy; and

5 (vi) creating awareness in the stu-  
6 dents of local businesses and integrating  
7 expertise from local business and nonprofit  
8 providers into the program, as appropriate;

9 (B) reaches all students in the cohort who  
10 are participating in the demonstration project;  
11 and

12 (C) is implemented consistently across all  
13 participating rural school sites; and

14 (6) evaluates the project, as described in section  
15 6.

16 (b) STAFF.—A non-profit entity receiving a grant  
17 under this Act shall hire, train, and employ personnel to  
18 administer and deliver the demonstration project. These  
19 individuals shall function as employees of the nonprofit en-  
20 tity but shall coordinate with the partnering rural schools  
21 and rural local educational agencies in the delivery of the  
22 program, consistent with the applicable agreements de-  
23 scribed in subsection (a)(3).

1 **SEC. 6. EVALUATION.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—A non-profit entity receiving a  
3 grant under this Act shall use a portion of grant funds  
4 to award a contract, on a competitive basis, to a third-  
5 party evaluator to enable the evaluator—

6 (1) to rigorously evaluate the impact of the en-  
7 tity's demonstration project under this Act in ac-  
8 cordance with subsection (d); and

9 (2) to submit the annual evaluation required  
10 under subsection (e).

11 (b) COMPETITIVE BASIS AND PREFERENCE.—The  
12 non-profit entity shall select the evaluator for a contract  
13 under this section by a competitive process, with a pref-  
14 erence given to evaluators using evaluation models that  
15 utilize experimental design methodology.

16 (c) APPROVAL BY THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary  
17 or the Secretary's designee shall approve the evaluator se-  
18 lected by the non-profit entity before the entity enters into  
19 a contract with the evaluator.

20 (d) CONTENT OF EVALUATION.—An evaluator receiv-  
21 ing a contract for a demonstration project under this Act  
22 shall perform an evaluation of the project that—

23 (1) follows rigorous standards of third-party  
24 evaluation in determining the effects of the dem-  
25 onstration project under this Act on—

1 (A) the rigor of secondary school course-  
2 taking the rigor of secondary school courses  
3 taken by participating students;

4 (B) the performance of participating stu-  
5 dents on statewide assessments;

6 (C) the engagement of participating stu-  
7 dents in school, including attendance rates, dis-  
8 cipline data, and grades;

9 (D) the rates of participating students tak-  
10 ing college entrance examinations, such as the  
11 SAT or ACT;

12 (E) the career aspirations of participating  
13 students;

14 (F) the rates of participating students en-  
15 rolling in career and technical education  
16 courses, dual enrollment courses, advanced  
17 placement courses, or other related programs;

18 (G) the secondary school graduation rates  
19 of participating students;

20 (H) the rates among participating students  
21 of institution of higher education application,  
22 enrollment, and program completion; and

23 (I) the participating students' awareness of  
24 State economic indicators and workforce needs;  
25 and

1           (2) follows a rigorous model so that findings re-  
2           garding the program outcomes meet standards of  
3           scientifically-based research, as defined in section  
4           9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education  
5           Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801); and

6           (3) addresses the scalability and replicability of  
7           the program model with respect to other rural areas,  
8           including—

9                   (A) the identification of elements that are  
10                  integral to program effectiveness;

11                   (B) efficacy in use of Federal funds; and

12                   (C) the impact of coordination with State  
13                  workforce development efforts.

14           (e) ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT.—An evaluator  
15           receiving a contract under this section shall submit an an-  
16           nual evaluation on the progress of the program to the Sec-  
17           retary.

18 **SEC. 7. REPORTS.**

19           (a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—A non-profit entity receiving  
20           a grant under this Act shall submit an annual report on  
21           the progress of the demonstration project to the Secretary  
22           for each year of the grant period.

23           (b) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—

24                   (1) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than 18  
25                  months after amounts are appropriated under this

1 Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress an in-  
2 terim report on the progress of the demonstration  
3 projects funded under this Act that includes the out-  
4 come measures described in section 6(d)(1).

5 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days  
6 after the last day of the grant period for all grants  
7 under this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Con-  
8 gress a final report on the results of the program,  
9 which report shall include—

10 (A) the outcome measures described in sec-  
11 tion 6(d)(1); and

12 (B) recommendations for such legislative  
13 or administrative action as the Secretary deter-  
14 mines appropriate.

15 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

16 In this Act:

17 (1) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The  
18 term “institution of higher education” has the  
19 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher  
20 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

21 (2) RURAL LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—  
22 The term “rural local educational agency” means a  
23 local educational agency that meets—

24 (A) the eligibility requirements under sec-  
25 tion 6211(b) (20 U.S.C. 7345(b)) for participa-

1           tion in the program described in subpart 1 of  
2           part B of title VI of the Elementary and Sec-  
3           ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7345  
4           et seq.); or

5                   (B) the eligibility requirements under sec-  
6           tion 6221(b) (20 U.S.C. 7351(b)) for participa-  
7           tion in the program described in subpart 2 of  
8           part B of such title VI (20 U.S.C. 7351 et  
9           seq.).

10           (3) RURAL SCHOOL.—The term “rural school”  
11           means a school served by a rural local educational  
12           agency.

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

15 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16           There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
17           this Act \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008  
18           through 2013.

○