

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 240

To set the United States on track to ensure children are ready to learn when they begin kindergarten.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 14, 2009

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mr. BOND) 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 set the United States on track to ensure children are ready to learn when they begin kindergarten.

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 “Ready to Learn Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT.**

6 The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of  
7 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) is amended by adding at  
8 the end the following:

1 **“TITLE X—SUPPORTING VOL-**  
2 **UNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN**

3 **“SEC. 10001. SUPPORTING VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN**  
4 **GRANTS.**

5 “(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From amounts avail-  
6 able under section 10003, the Secretary is authorized to  
7 award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible States to  
8 pay the Federal share of establishing and administering  
9 full day voluntary prekindergarten programs for children  
10 age 4 in the State, in order to promote school readiness  
11 for such children.

12 “(b) APPLICATION.—

13 “(1) IN GENERAL.—If a State desires a grant  
14 under this title, the Governor of such State shall  
15 submit to the Secretary an application at such time,  
16 in such manner, and containing a plan that outlines  
17 how and when such State expects to provide vol-  
18 untary prekindergarten for every 4-year old in the  
19 State.

20 “(2) SUBGRANTS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
22 subsection (c)(2), a State that receives a grant  
23 under this title shall use the grant funds to  
24 award subgrants to eligible entities to carry out  
25 the requirements of this title.

1           “(B) SUBGRANTS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED  
2 PROVIDERS.—In awarding subgrants under  
3 subparagraph (A), a State shall use not less  
4 than 25 percent of the grant funds provided to  
5 the State to award subgrants to eligible entities  
6 that are community-based providers of pre-  
7 kindergarten programs.

8           “(C) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—In this para-  
9 graph, the term ‘eligible entity’ includes schools,  
10 child care entities, Head Start programs, or  
11 other community-based providers of prekinde-  
12 rgarten programs.

13       “(c) USE OF FUNDS.—A State that receives a grant  
14 under this title shall use—

15           “(1) not less than 85 percent of the funds pro-  
16 vided under such grant to carry out the activities de-  
17 scribed in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (d);  
18 and

19           “(2) not more than 15 percent of such funds at  
20 the State level for quality investment described in  
21 subsection (d)(3).

22       “(d) USE OF FUNDS.—

23           “(1) IN GENERAL.—A State that receives a  
24 grant under this title shall use grant funds to pro-  
25 vide a high-quality prekindergarten program that—

1           “(A) serves children age 4 in the State,  
2           serving first children from low-income families  
3           with incomes that are not more than 200 per-  
4           cent of the poverty line and those who are lim-  
5           ited English proficient;

6           “(B) not later than 2 years after the re-  
7           ceipt of the grant, ensures that each classroom  
8           is taught by a teacher who has—

9                   “(i) a baccalaureate degree or ad-  
10                  vanced degree in early childhood education;  
11                  or

12                   “(ii) a baccalaureate degree and spe-  
13                  cialized training in early childhood develop-  
14                  ment;

15           “(C) utilizes a developmentally, culturally,  
16           and linguistically appropriate curriculum that is  
17           aligned with the State early learning standards  
18           and valid and reliable, multiple assessments for  
19           the purpose of improving instruction; and

20           “(D) has a teacher-child ratio of not more  
21           than 1 to 10 and a group size of not more than  
22           20.

23           “(2) ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDS.—After a  
24           State has fulfilled the requirements described in  
25           paragraph (1), such State may use grant funds—

1 “(A) to serve younger children;

2 “(B) to increase salaries;

3 “(C) for additional comprehensive services  
4 as may be needed; and

5 “(D) for the construction of new facilities,  
6 or the renovation, repair, or alteration of exist-  
7 ing facilities, necessary to commence or con-  
8 tinue such prekindergarten.

9 “(3) QUALITY INVESTMENT.—A State that re-  
10 ceives a grant under this title shall use grant  
11 funds—

12 “(A) to carry out other activities needed to  
13 ensure the health and safety of children served  
14 under this title;

15 “(B) for professional development for  
16 teachers and staff of the prekindergarten pro-  
17 gram described in paragraph (1); and

18 “(C) to provide comprehensive services.

19 **“SEC. 10002. ADMINISTRATION.**

20 “(a) FEDERAL SHARE; NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—

21 “(1) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of a  
22 grant under this title shall be 50 percent of the costs  
23 of carrying out the activities described in section  
24 10001(d).

1           “(2) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Federal  
2           share of a grant under this title shall be provided in  
3           cash.

4           “(b) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—The Secretary  
5           may not award a grant under this title to any State unless  
6           the Secretary first determines that the per-child expendi-  
7           ture by the State and its political subdivisions for pre-  
8           kindergarten programs (other than funds used to pay the  
9           non-Federal share under this section) for the fiscal year  
10          for which the determination is made is equal to or greater  
11          than such expenditure for the preceding fiscal year.

12          “(c) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Grant funds re-  
13          ceived under this title shall be used to supplement and  
14          not supplant other Federal, State, and local public funds  
15          expended to promote voluntary prekindergarten programs  
16          in the State.

17          “(d) PROVISION OF GRANT FUNDS.—In awarding a  
18          grant under this title to a State, the Secretary shall pro-  
19          vide the grant funds to the Governor of the State, to en-  
20          able the Governor to designate a lead agency to best direct  
21          the funds in a manner that improves the State’s programs  
22          by carrying out the requirements of this title.

23          “(e) COORDINATION.—In carrying out this title, the  
24          Secretary shall coordinate, not less often than quarterly,  
25          with the Secretary of Health and Human Services regard-

1 ing the review of State plans as described in section  
2 10001(b) and the implementation of the prekindergarten  
3 programs under this title.

4 “(f) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

5 “(1) STATE REPORTS.—Each State that re-  
6 ceives a grant under this title shall submit to the  
7 Secretary an annual report detailing the effective-  
8 ness of each prekindergarten program in that State  
9 funded under this title.

10 “(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary  
11 shall submit to the Committee on Health, Edu-  
12 cation, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the  
13 Committee on Education and Labor of the House of  
14 Representatives an annual report that describes each  
15 State program of assistance for prekindergarten pro-  
16 grams funded under this title.

17 “(3) CONTENTS OF REPORTS.—A report sub-  
18 mitted under paragraph (1) or (2) shall include—

19 “(A) a description of each action taken to  
20 move toward providing a high-quality prekinder-  
21 garten education to all 4-year olds;

22 “(B) a summary of each measure that will  
23 be taken to achieve the goal of providing full  
24 day high-quality prekindergarten to all 4-year

1 olds, including a timetable according to which  
2 such measures will be implemented;

3 “(C) a description of all efforts to improve  
4 the integration of full day high-quality pre-  
5 kindergarten programs with the kindergarten  
6 through grade 12 education system; and

7 “(D) a description of all efforts to educate  
8 parents about best practices for the role of par-  
9 ents in the early education of a child.

10 **“SEC. 10003. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

11 “There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
12 this title such sums as may be necessary for each of the  
13 fiscal years 2010 through 2015.”.

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