

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 2887

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to address and take action to combat rural teacher shortages across the United States.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 18, 2019

Mr. JONES 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 amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to address and take action to combat rural teacher shortages across the United States.

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 “Classrooms Reflecting  
5        Communities Act of 2019”.

6        **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7        Congress finds the following:

8                (1) There are persistent shortages across the  
9        Nation of teachers in high-demand fields and sub-

1 jects. These include science, mathematics, special  
2 education, and teachers of English learners.

3 (2) More than 40 percent of all small, rural  
4 school districts in the United States struggle with  
5 adequately staffing their schools. Rural districts in  
6 particular face high teacher vacancies in special edu-  
7 cation and STEM fields and have greater difficulty  
8 filling the position of teachers of English learners  
9 than urban and suburban districts.

10 (3) Research shows that teacher shortages have  
11 serious consequences for student achievement, the  
12 economic well-being of a school district, and the  
13 overall effectiveness of the teaching workforce. Fur-  
14 ther, a growing body of research reveals a substan-  
15 tial amount of differences schools can make are at-  
16 tributable to teachers.

17 (4) Additionally, previous research estimated  
18 that 40 percent of schools do not have any teachers  
19 of color on staff, and more recent data suggest that  
20 teachers of color remain more likely to teach in  
21 urban schools and schools where a greater percent-  
22 age of students are eligible for a free or reduced  
23 price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National  
24 School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.).

1           (5) Research shows that teachers of color help  
2 close achievement gaps and are viewed positively by  
3 all students. Research also demonstrates benefits, in-  
4 cluding improved academic achievement, greater  
5 educational attainment, and higher academic aspira-  
6 tions, for students of color who are taught by teach-  
7 ers of color. Likewise, it is important for all stu-  
8 dents, not just students of color, to have diverse  
9 teachers and leaders in their schools.

10           (6) Strategies to address teacher shortages are  
11 multi-faceted and should follow broader efforts to  
12 modernize and elevate the teaching profession. For  
13 example, efforts to improve recruitment and prepa-  
14 ration of teachers will be more effective if imple-  
15 mented in conjunction with policies to improve the  
16 working conditions of teachers, elevate the profession  
17 through improved selectivity, comprehensive and rig-  
18 orous preparation, and higher pay, and professional  
19 development and other supports.

20           (7) Research shows that Grow Your Own Pro-  
21 grams can be an effective strategy to recruit diverse,  
22 well-qualified candidates to the profession and pre-  
23 pare them with the needs of the community and  
24 school district in mind. According to the Learning  
25 Policy Institute, Grow Your Own programs have

1 shown positive results in recruiting and retaining di-  
2 verse teachers in the hardest to staff schools, in part  
3 by leveraging participants' existing connections to  
4 the community and prior experience working closely  
5 with the student population.

6 **SEC. 3. GROWING THE RURAL EDUCATOR WORKFORCE.**

7 Part B of title V of the Elementary and Secondary  
8 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7341 et seq.) is amend-  
9 ed—

10 (1) by redesignating subpart 3 as subpart 4;

11 and

12 (2) by inserting after subpart 2 the following:

13 **“Subpart 3—Growing the Rural Educator Workforce**

14 **“SEC. 5228. GROWING THE RURAL EDUCATOR WORKFORCE.**

15 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 “(1) 2+2 PROGRAM.—The term ‘2+2 program’  
17 means a partnership between a junior or community  
18 college, as defined in section 312 of the Higher Edu-  
19 cation Act of 1965, and a 4-year degree-granting in-  
20 stitution of higher education, in which teacher can-  
21 didates begin teacher preparation in the junior or  
22 community college and fully transfer their credits to  
23 the 4-year degree-granting institution of higher edu-  
24 cation where the students complete their teacher  
25 preparation.

1           “(2) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.—The term ‘eligi-  
2           ble partnership’ means a partnership as follows:

3                   “(A) That includes one of the following:

4                           “(i) A school, department, or program  
5                           of education within a public or other non-  
6                           profit institution of higher education, in-  
7                           cluding a graduate level program, that is  
8                           State-accredited and is eligible to receive  
9                           Federal funds under title IV of the Higher  
10                           Education Act of 1965, which may include  
11                           a teacher preparation program in existence  
12                           on the date of enactment of the Class-  
13                           rooms Reflecting Communities Act of  
14                           2019, which may include a community col-  
15                           lege in partnership with such an institu-  
16                           tion.

17                           “(ii) A local educational agency.

18                           “(iii) A State-accredited nonprofit  
19                           educational organization that provides al-  
20                           ternative routes to State certification of  
21                           teachers.

22                   “(B) That includes one of the following:

23                           “(i) A rural high-need local edu-  
24                           cational agency.

1                   “(ii) A rural high-need school served  
2                   by a rural high-need local educational  
3                   agency, or a consortium of such schools.

4                   “(C) That may include an optional part-  
5                   ner.

6                   “(3) GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAM.—The term  
7                   ‘Grow Your Own Program’ means a program that—

8                   “(A) is designed to counteract a local  
9                   teacher shortage problem or increase teacher di-  
10                  versity;

11                  “(B) collaborates with the local commu-  
12                  nity, schools, and other organizations to identify  
13                  what the education needs of the community are;

14                  “(C) supports teacher candidates in devel-  
15                  oping the skills needed to personalize instruc-  
16                  tion, provide culturally responsive pedagogy,  
17                  and effectively support students with disabilities  
18                  and English learners;

19                  “(D) supports the preparation of teachers  
20                  through extensive clinical experience that is  
21                  connected to their coursework in schools in the  
22                  community, including schools in the eligible  
23                  partnership, as they complete and earn their  
24                  teaching or school leadership credential and  
25                  may include a 2+2 program;

1           “(E) integrates career-focused courses on  
2 education topics with school-based learning ex-  
3 perience;

4           “(F) provides a high-quality mentoring  
5 program for teacher candidates to support the  
6 candidates through their first 2 years of teach-  
7 ing;

8           “(G) provides support, including financial  
9 assistance, to teacher and school leader can-  
10 didates from the community who are planning  
11 to teach in schools in the community, which  
12 may include housing subsidies, stipends, and  
13 tuition assistance;

14           “(H) sustains efforts to recruit and  
15 incentivize more people to consider entering the  
16 teaching profession, especially in high-need  
17 fields and underserved schools; and

18           “(I) works in partnership with members of  
19 the eligible partnership to provide academic,  
20 counseling, and programmatic supports.

21           “(4) OPTIONAL PARTNER.—The term ‘optional  
22 partner’ means any of the following entities:

23           “(A) The Governor of the State.

24           “(B) A State educational agency.

25           “(C) The State board of education.

1           “(D) The State agency for higher edu-  
2 cation.

3           “(E) A business or a large employer in the  
4 community.

5           “(F) A teacher organization.

6           “(G) A charter school (as defined in sec-  
7 tion 4310).

8           “(H) A community or grassroots organiza-  
9 tion.

10          “(I) A nonprofit entity.

11          “(5) RURAL HIGH-NEED LOCAL EDUCATIONAL  
12 AGENCY.—The term ‘rural high-need local edu-  
13 cational agency’ means a local educational agency—

14           “(A) located in a rural county, designated  
15 with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as  
16 determined by the Secretary;

17           “(B) that has persistent teacher vacancies  
18 or a significant portion of teachers employed by  
19 the agency who are not fully certified or li-  
20 censed to teach or who are not certified or li-  
21 censed to teach in the subject area they are as-  
22 signed; and

23           “(C) for which not less than 23.5 percent  
24 of the children served by the agency are from



1 low-income families, as described in section  
2 1124(c)(1)(A).

3 “(6) RURAL HIGH-NEED SCHOOL.—The term  
4 ‘rural high-need school’ means an elementary school  
5 or secondary school—

6 “(A) located in a rural county;

7 “(B) that has persistent teacher vacancies  
8 or not less than 10 percent of the teachers  
9 teaching at such school are not fully certified or  
10 licensed to teach or certified or licensed to  
11 teach in the subject area they are assigned; and

12 “(C) that is in the highest quartile of  
13 schools in a ranking of all schools served by the  
14 local educational agency serving such school,  
15 ranked in descending order by percentage of  
16 students from low-income families enrolled in  
17 such schools, as described in section  
18 1124(c)(1)(A).

19 “(7) TEACHING SKILLS.—The term ‘teaching  
20 skills’ means skills that enable a teacher to—

21 “(A) increase student learning, achieve-  
22 ment, and the ability to apply knowledge;

23 “(B) effectively convey, explain, and pro-  
24 vide opportunities for students to develop the  
25 skills aligned with the full depth and breadth of

1 the State challenging academic standards, in-  
2 cluding the application of academic subject  
3 matter;

4 “(C) effectively teach higher-order analyt-  
5 ical, critical thinking, evaluation, problem-solv-  
6 ing, and communication skills;

7 “(D) employ strategies grounded in the  
8 disciplines of teaching and learning that—

9 “(i) are based on empirically based  
10 practice and evidence-based research,  
11 where applicable, related to teaching and  
12 learning;

13 “(ii) are specific to academic subject  
14 matter; and

15 “(iii) focus on the identification of  
16 students’ specific learning needs, particu-  
17 larly students with disabilities, students  
18 who are English learners, students who are  
19 gifted and talented, and students with low  
20 literacy levels, and the tailoring of aca-  
21 demic instruction to such needs;

22 “(E) design and conduct an ongoing as-  
23 sessment of student learning, which may in-  
24 clude the use of formative assessments, per-  
25 formance-based assessments, project-based as-

1           assessments, or portfolio assessments, that meas-  
2           ure higher-order thinking skills (including appli-  
3           cation, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) and  
4           use this information to inform and personalize  
5           instruction;

6           “(F) support the social, emotional, and  
7           academic achievement of all students, including  
8           effectively creating an inclusive classroom envi-  
9           ronment, including the ability to implement  
10          positive behavioral interventions, trauma-in-  
11          formed care, and other support strategies;

12          “(G) are culturally responsive and linguis-  
13          tically inclusive;

14          “(H) communicate and work with parents  
15          and involve parents in their children’s edu-  
16          cation; and

17          “(I) use age-appropriate and develop-  
18          mentally appropriate strategies and practices  
19          for students in early childhood education pro-  
20          grams and elementary schools and secondary  
21          schools.

22          “(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are—

23                  “(1) to combat persistent rural teacher short-  
24                  ages, especially in State-identified high-need fields,

1 by providing Federal support to States to develop  
2 and run Grow Your Own Programs;

3 “(2) to recruit diverse and well-prepared indi-  
4 viduals with the teaching skills and qualifications  
5 identified as high need by the community into the  
6 teaching profession; and

7 “(3) to increase student engagement in the  
8 classroom and student academic outcomes.

9 “(c) GRANTS.—

10 “(1) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary  
11 shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible  
12 partnerships to enable the eligible partnerships to—

13 “(A) develop and run a Grow Your Own  
14 Program to recruit diverse teacher candidates  
15 from the community into the teaching profes-  
16 sion and support them through high-quality  
17 preparation to full teacher certification or licen-  
18 sure;

19 “(B) provide support for identifying what  
20 the unique needs of the community and school  
21 district are in terms of high-need areas and  
22 high-need fields;

23 “(C) support efforts to raise awareness  
24 about the teaching profession and enact recruit-

1           ment drives in high-need communities and high-  
2           need fields;

3           “(D) require candidates to complete all  
4           State requirements to become fully certified;

5           “(E) provide academic and testing sup-  
6           ports, including advising and financial assist-  
7           ance, to candidates for admission and comple-  
8           tion of education preparation programs as well  
9           as State licensure assessments;

10          “(F) provide a year-long clinical experience  
11          or teaching or school leadership residency with  
12          a stipend to cover living expenses; and

13          “(G) provide opportunities for candidates  
14          to practice and develop teaching skills and dis-  
15          positions needed to be effective.

16          “(2) DURATION OF GRANT.—A grant awarded  
17          under this section shall be for 5 years.

18          “(3) APPLICATION.—Each eligible partnership  
19          desiring a grant under this section shall submit an  
20          application to the Secretary accompanied by such in-  
21          formation as the Secretary may require. Each such  
22          application shall contain—

23                 “(A) a needs assessment of the community  
24                 hosting the Grow Your Own Program, dem-  
25                 onstrating the existence of—

1 “(i) persistent teacher shortages;

2 “(ii) a high percentage of teachers not  
3 fully certified or licensed to teach or not  
4 certified or licensed to teach in the subject  
5 area assigned; or

6 “(iii) a lack of teacher diversity;

7 “(B) a description of how the proposed  
8 Grow Your Own Program fulfills the criteria  
9 described in subsection (a)(3) and how each  
10 component of the Program will contribute to  
11 combating teacher shortages or lack of teacher  
12 diversity;

13 “(C) a description of how the proposed  
14 Grow Your Own Program will prepare prospec-  
15 tive teachers to teach in a culturally diverse  
16 classroom with pedagogy that reflects the expe-  
17 riences of their students;

18 “(D) a description of how the proposed  
19 Grow Your Own Program will prepare prospec-  
20 tive teachers to support students with disabil-  
21 ities and English learners;

22 “(E) a description of the roles of all part-  
23 ners in the eligible partnership, including what  
24 component of the proposed Grow Your Own  
25 Program for which each member shall be re-

1           sponsible and how they would support the over-  
2           all purpose of the Program;

3           “(F) a description of how the proposed  
4           Grow Your Own Program will use grant funds  
5           and any other available financial resources to  
6           support the Program; and

7           “(G) a description of how the eligible part-  
8           nership will collect metrics and accountability  
9           measures for the proposed Grow Your Own  
10          Program, including efforts to report the data  
11          stipulated in the accountability section.

12          “(4) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this  
13          section, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible  
14          partnerships that include an eligible institution, as  
15          described in section 371(a) of the Higher Education  
16          Act of 1965.

17          “(5) GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS.—An eligible  
18          partnership that receives a grant under this section  
19          shall develop and run a Grow Your Own Program  
20          that includes—

21                  “(A) targeted recruitment efforts, includ-  
22                  ing promotion of the teaching profession—

23                          “(i) at high schools, minority-serving  
24                          institutions, and community centers; and

1           “(ii) with paraprofessionals, instruc-  
2           tional assistants, district employees not  
3           certified to teach or lead (such as long-  
4           term substitute teachers), after school and  
5           summer program staff, parent school vol-  
6           unteers, retired military personnel, and  
7           other career changers with experience in  
8           hard-to-staff areas who are not currently  
9           certified to teach or lead, with a specific  
10          focus on recruiting individuals who are re-  
11          flective of the race, ethnicity, and native  
12          language of the existing community’s stu-  
13          dent population;

14          “(B) creation of curriculum and  
15          coursework with principles of culturally respon-  
16          sive education woven throughout, in addition to  
17          a scaffolded sequence of coursework explicitly  
18          teaching culturally responsive pedagogy, teach-  
19          ing skills to support students with disabilities,  
20          and teaching skills to support English learners;

21          “(C) at least one year of supervised clinical  
22          experience, with a focus on partnering with  
23          schools served by rural high-need local edu-  
24          cational agencies;



1           “(D) mentorship and assistance with the  
2 teacher licensure and certification process, in-  
3 cluding test preparation;

4           “(E) high-quality induction programs;

5           “(F) direct financial assistance, including  
6 reduced tuition and in-kind financial support,  
7 such as childcare, especially for teachers being  
8 certified or licensed to teach in high-need fields  
9 or high-need communities;

10           “(G) plans to engage in outreach and col-  
11 laboration efforts with local schools, school dis-  
12 tricts, institutions of higher education, and  
13 community organizations; and

14           “(H) plans to use data to assess where  
15 teachers certified or licensed to teach with as-  
16 sistance from the Program are teaching and  
17 how that’s impacting teacher shortage numbers.

18           “(6) ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION.—An  
19 eligible partnership that receives a grant under this  
20 section shall, at the end of each grant year, submit  
21 to the Secretary a report on the Grow Your Own  
22 Program developed with the grant funds that in-  
23 cludes the following information:

24           “(A)           Enrollment           information,  
25           disaggregated by race and ethnicity and gender

1           except in such instances whereby the number of  
2           people in a category is too small that  
3           disaggregation would reveal personally identifi-  
4           able information.

5           “(B) A description of the activities under-  
6           taken by the eligible partnership over the year  
7           using grant funding.

8           “(C) Graduation rates and completion  
9           numbers, disaggregated by race and ethnicity  
10          and gender except in such instances whereby  
11          the number of people in a category is too small  
12          that disaggregation would reveal personally  
13          identifiable information.

14          “(D) The percentage and total number of  
15          teacher candidates who have been certified or li-  
16          censed to teach, disaggregated by subject and  
17          area of certification or licensure, and by race  
18          and ethnicity, and gender except in such in-  
19          stances whereby the number of people in a cat-  
20          egory is too small that disaggregation would re-  
21          veal personally identifiable information.

22          “(E) The 3-year and 5-year teacher reten-  
23          tion rate in the same school and local edu-  
24          cational agency, within the profession, and in  
25          the subjects for which the teachers were

1 trained, disaggregated by race and ethnicity,  
2 and gender except in such instances whereby  
3 the number of people in a category is too small  
4 that disaggregation would reveal personally  
5 identifiable information.

6 “(F) A survey of teachers starting in the  
7 second year of the grant to assess and provide  
8 feedback on the Program’s efforts and whether  
9 there should be any modifications to address  
10 the community’s needs.

11 “(G) A survey of community members,  
12 such as parents, starting in the second year of  
13 the grant to assess and provide feedback on the  
14 Program’s efforts and whether there should be  
15 any modifications to address the community’s  
16 needs.”.

○