

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3848

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to fund additional school-based mental health providers to help reduce psychological harm, and assist with the return to adaptive coping in schools following a violent or traumatic crisis, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 16, 2022

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

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to fund additional school-based mental health providers to help reduce psychological harm, and assist with the return to adaptive coping in schools following a violent or traumatic crisis, 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 “Helping Education
5 After Loss Act of 2022” or the “HEAL Act of 2022”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) On Tuesday, November 30, 2021, a student
2 at Oxford High School killed and injured several
3 students with a handgun loaded with a high-capacity
4 magazine.

5 (2) Children exposed to violence, injury, and
6 other potentially traumatic events are at risk for de-
7 veloping traumatic stress reactions, including as fol-
8 lows:

9 (A) The National Center for PTSD esti-
10 mates that 28 percent of people who have wit-
11 nessed a mass shooting develop PTSD and 1/
12 3 develop acute stress disorder.

13 (B) While some survivors only experience
14 temporary symptoms, others will be sympto-
15 matic for a much longer period of time and
16 even develop chronic psychiatric disorders.

17 (C) Both short-term and long-term impair-
18 ments can cause severe distress and have pro-
19 found effects on academic achievement and the
20 social and emotional growth of impacted stu-
21 dents.

22 (3) Youth with access to mental health services
23 in school-based health centers are 10 times more
24 likely to seek care for mental health or substance
25 abuse than youth without access.

1 (4) The leading counseling, guidance, and men-
2 tal health organizations, including the American
3 School Counselor Association, the National Associa-
4 tion of School Psychologists, the National Associa-
5 tion of Social Workers, and the School Social Work
6 Association of America, recommend that schools
7 maintain—

8 (A) a maximum student to school coun-
9 selor ratio of 250 to 1;

10 (B) a maximum student to school psychol-
11 ogist ratio of 500 to 1; and

12 (C) a maximum student to school social
13 worker ratio of 250 to 1.

14 (5) According to the Education Trust, nearly 1
15 in 5 students do not have access to a counselor in
16 their school at all, and many of those students have
17 only limited access to other school support staff,
18 such as school psychologists or social workers.

19 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

20 In this Act:

21 (1) **ACUTE CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIVITY.**—The
22 term “acute crisis response activity” means an activ-
23 ity in response to an acute crisis, including services
24 to provide immediate trauma intervention, advocacy,

1 crisis intervention, death notification, and victim and
2 survivor assistance.

3 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
4 ty” means a local educational agency that serves a
5 school that has experienced a violent or traumatic
6 crisis.

7 (3) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
8 “local educational agency” means a public board of
9 education or other public authority legally con-
10 stituted within a State for either administrative con-
11 trol or direction of, or to perform a service function
12 for, public elementary schools or secondary schools
13 in a city, county, township, school district, or other
14 political subdivision of a State, or of or for a com-
15 bination of school districts or counties that is recog-
16 nized in a State as an administrative agency for its
17 public elementary schools or secondary schools.

18 (4) SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH PRO-
19 VIDER.—The term “school-based mental health pro-
20 vider” means a State-licensed or State-certified
21 school counselor, school psychologist, school social
22 worker, community-based mental health provider or-
23 ganization, or other State-licensed or State-certified
24 mental health professional qualified under State law

1 to provide mental health services to children and
2 adolescents.

3 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
4 the Secretary of Education.

5 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ACUTE CRISIS RESPONSE**
6 **GRANT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award
9 non-competitive grants from allotments under para-
10 graph (2) to eligible entities to fund additional full-
11 time, part-time, and contractual school-based mental
12 health providers and acute crisis response activities
13 in order to help the eligible entity respond to the vio-
14 lent or traumatic crisis.

15 (2) ALLOTMENTS.—From amounts appro-
16 priated under section 6 for a fiscal year, the Sec-
17 retary shall allot to each eligible entity an amount
18 that—

19 (A) is of sufficient size and scope to enable
20 the eligible entity to respond to the violent or
21 traumatic crisis; and

22 (B) is not more than \$250,000 for the fis-
23 cal year.

24 (b) DURATION.—A grant awarded under this section
25 shall be for not longer than a 2-year period, and may be

1 renewed for an additional 2-year period, at the Secretary's
2 discretion.

3 (c) NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY.—Not later than 30 days
4 after the date of a violent or traumatic crisis that affects
5 a school community, the Secretary shall notify the eligible
6 entity that serves such school of the availability of grant
7 awards under this section.

8 (d) APPLICATION.—An eligible entity that desires to
9 receive a grant under this section shall submit an applica-
10 tion to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and
11 containing such information as the Secretary may require.

12 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity awarded a
13 grant under this section shall use the grant funds to hire
14 additional full-time, part-time, and contractual school-
15 based mental health providers and acute crisis response
16 activities in order to help the eligible entity respond to the
17 violent or traumatic crisis.

18 (f) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds made
19 available under this section shall be used to supplement,
20 and not supplant, other Federal, State, or private funds
21 that would otherwise be expended to respond to the violent
22 or traumatic crisis.

1 **SEC. 5. STUDY ON THE AFFECTS OF VIOLENT AND TRAU-**
2 **MATIC EVENTS IN SCHOOLS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in collaboration
4 with Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall con-
5 duct a special resource study of communities that have
6 experienced a violent or traumatic crisis.

7 (b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under sub-
8 section (a), the Secretary shall—

9 (1) evaluate how violent and traumatic events
10 can affect a student’s mental health, and the poten-
11 tial risks for developing chronic psychiatric dis-
12 orders; and

13 (2) develop evidence-based best practices for a
14 school to return to learning after the school has been
15 disrupted due to violent or traumatic crisis, includ-
16 ing best practices for supporting school staff in such
17 return.

18 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

19 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
20 this Act—

21 (1) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2022; and

22 (2) such sums as may be necessary for each
23 succeeding fiscal year.

○