

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5098

To ensure that significantly more students graduate college with the international knowledge and experience essential for success in today's global economy through the establishment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program in the Department of State.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 15, 2022

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. WICKER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To ensure that significantly more students graduate college with the international knowledge and experience essential for success in today's global economy through the establishment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program in the Department of State.

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 “Senator Paul Simon
5 Study Abroad Program Act of 2022”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) To prepare students for success in the mod-
2 ern global economy, opportunities for study abroad
3 should be included as part of a well-rounded edu-
4 cation.

5 (2) Study abroad programs provide students
6 with unparalleled access to international knowledge,
7 an unmatched opportunity to learn foreign lan-
8 guages, and a unique environment for developing
9 cultural understanding, all of which are knowledge
10 and skills needed in today’s global economy.

11 (3) Only 10 percent of United States college
12 students study abroad before they graduate, leaving
13 90 percent of graduates entering the workforce with-
14 out the global skills, knowledge, and experiences af-
15 forded by study abroad programs that will position
16 them for success in the global economy. Minority
17 students, first-generation college students, commu-
18 nity college students, and students with disabilities
19 are also significantly underrepresented in study
20 abroad participation.

21 (4) Congress authorized the establishment of
22 the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study
23 Abroad Fellowship Program (referred to in this sec-
24 tion as the “Lincoln Commission”) under section
25 104 of the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets

1 Act, 2004 (division H of Public Law 108–199). Pur-
2 suant to its mandate, the Lincoln Commission sub-
3 mitted a report to Congress and to the President
4 containing its recommendations for greatly expand-
5 ing the opportunity for students at institutions of
6 higher education in the United States to study
7 abroad, with special emphasis on studying in devel-
8 oping nations.

9 (5) According to the Lincoln Commission,
10 “[e]xperience shows that leadership from adminis-
11 trators and faculty will drive the number of study
12 abroad participants higher and improve the quality
13 of programs. Such leadership is the only way that
14 study abroad will become an integral part of the un-
15 dergraduate experience.” A competitive grant pro-
16 gram is necessary to encourage and support such
17 leadership.

18 (6) Student health, safety, and security while
19 studying abroad is, and must continue to be, a pri-
20 ority for institutions of higher education and study
21 abroad programs.

22 (7) The COVID–19 pandemic has limited or
23 prevented students from participating in study
24 abroad due to travel restrictions and reduced budg-
25 ets. In the post-pandemic world, increasing access to

1 study abroad for students at institutions of higher
2 education throughout the United States will be crit-
3 ical to ensuring that those students gain the skills,
4 knowledge, and experiences necessary to maintain
5 the leadership of the United States in tackling global
6 challenges, such as pandemics, and succeeding in a
7 global economy.

8 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

9 The purposes of this Act are—

10 (1) to ensure that significantly more students
11 have access to quality study abroad opportunities;

12 (2) to ensure that the diversity of students
13 studying abroad reflects the diversity of students
14 and institutions of higher education in the United
15 States;

16 (3) to encourage greater diversity in study
17 abroad destinations by increasing the portion of
18 study abroad that takes place in nontraditional
19 study abroad destinations, especially in developing
20 countries; and

21 (4) to encourage a greater commitment by in-
22 stitutions of higher education to expand study
23 abroad opportunities.

1 **SEC. 4. SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM.**

2 (a) SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PRO-
3 GRAM.—

4 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Subject to the avail-
5 ability of appropriations and under the authority of
6 the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act
7 of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2451 et seq.), the Secretary of
8 State shall—

9 (A) rename the Increase and Diversify
10 Education Abroad for U.S. Students Program
11 (commonly known as “IDEAS”) as the “Sen-
12 ator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program” (re-
13 ferred to in this section as the “Program”); and

14 (B) enhance the program in accordance
15 with this paragraph.

16 (2) OBJECTIVES.—Not later than 10 years
17 after the date of enactment of the Senator Paul
18 Simon Study Abroad Program Act of 2022, the Pro-
19 gram shall strive to accomplish the following objec-
20 tives:

21 (A) At least 1,000,000 undergraduate stu-
22 dents from the United States are studying
23 abroad annually.

24 (B) The demographics of study abroad
25 participation reflect the demographics of the
26 United States undergraduate population

1 through an increase in the participation rate of
2 previously underrepresented groups.

3 (C) An increasing portion of study abroad
4 takes place in nontraditional study abroad des-
5 tinations, with a substantial portion of such in-
6 creases in developing countries.

7 (3) COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO INSTITUTIONS OF
8 HIGHER EDUCATION.—In order to accomplish the
9 objectives described in paragraph (2), the Secretary
10 of State shall award grants, on a competitive basis,
11 to institutions of higher education, either individ-
12 ually or as part of a consortium, based on applica-
13 tions by such institutions that—

14 (A) set forth detailed plans for using grant
15 funds to further such objectives;

16 (B) include an institutional commitment to
17 expanding access to study abroad;

18 (C) include plans for evaluating progress
19 made in increasing access to study abroad;

20 (D) describe how increases in study abroad
21 participation achieved through the grant will be
22 sustained in subsequent years; and

23 (E) demonstrate that the study abroad
24 programs have established health, safety, and
25 security guidelines and procedures, informed by

1 Department of State travel advisories and other
2 appropriate Federal agencies and resources, in-
3 cluding the Overseas Security Advisory Council
4 and the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
5 vention.

6 (4) IMPLEMENTATION OF LINCOLN COMMISSION
7 RECOMMENDATIONS.—In administering the Pro-
8 gram, the Secretary of State shall take fully into ac-
9 count the recommendations of the Lincoln Commis-
10 sion, including—

11 (A) institutions of higher education apply-
12 ing for grants described in paragraph (3) may
13 use Program funds to support direct student
14 costs;

15 (B) diversity shall be a defining char-
16 acteristic of the Program; and

17 (C) quality control shall be a defining
18 characteristic of the Program.

19 (5) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this sub-
20 section, the Secretary of State shall consult with
21 representatives of diverse institutions of higher edu-
22 cation and educational policy organizations and
23 other individuals with appropriate expertise.

24 (b) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than December 31
25 of each year, the Secretary of State shall submit a report

1 to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and
2 the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Rep-
3 resentatives that describes the implementation of the Pro-
4 gram during the most recently concluded fiscal year.

5 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
6 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the Pro-
7 gram such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023
8 and for each subsequent fiscal year.

9 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) CONSORTIUM.—The term “consortium”
11 means a group that—

12 (A) includes at least 1 institution of higher
13 education; and

14 (B) may include nongovernmental organi-
15 zations that provide and promote study abroad
16 opportunities for students.

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

21 (3) NONTRADITIONAL STUDY ABROAD DESTINA-
22 TION.—The term “nontraditional study abroad des-
23 tination” means a location that is determined by the
24 Secretary of State to be a less common destination
25 for students who study abroad.

1 (4) STUDENT.—The term “student” means an
2 individual who—

3 (A) meets the requirements under section
4 484(a)(5) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
5 (20 U.S.C. 1091(a)(5)); and

6 (B) is enrolled at an institution of higher
7 education located within the United States.

8 (5) STUDY ABROAD.—The term “study abroad”
9 means an educational program of study, work, serv-
10 ice learning, research, internship, or combination of
11 such activities that—

12 (A) is conducted outside of the United
13 States; and

14 (B) carries academic credit.

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