

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 961

To develop a database of projects that are proven or promising in terms of moving welfare recipients into work.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 27, 2017

Mr. YOUNG introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

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## A BILL

To develop a database of projects that are proven or promising in terms of moving welfare recipients into work.

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 “Using Evidence to  
5 Move Welfare Recipients into Work Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE.**

7 Section 413 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.  
8 613) is amended by adding at the end the following:

1       “(k) DEVELOPMENT OF WHAT WORKS CLEARING-  
2 HOUSE OF PROVEN AND PROMISING APPROACHES INTO  
3 MOVE WELFARE RECIPIENTS TO WORK.—

4               “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consulta-  
5 tion with the Secretary of Labor, shall develop a  
6 database (which shall be referred to as the ‘What  
7 Works Clearinghouse of Proven and Promising  
8 Projects to Move Welfare Recipients into Work’) of  
9 the projects that used a proven approach or a prom-  
10 ising approach in moving welfare recipients into  
11 work, based on independent, rigorous evaluations of  
12 the projects. The database shall include a separate  
13 listing of projects that used a developmental ap-  
14 proach in delivering services and a further separate  
15 listing of the projects that used an approach in de-  
16 livering services that was proven to be ineffective in  
17 achieving positive outcomes. The Secretary shall add  
18 to the What Works Clearinghouse of Proven and  
19 Promising Projects to Move Welfare Recipients into  
20 Work data about the projects that, based on an  
21 independent, well-conducted experimental evaluation  
22 of a program or project, using random assignment  
23 or other research methodologies that allow for the  
24 strongest possible causal inferences, have shown they

1 are proven, promising, developmental, or ineffective  
2 approaches.

3 “(2) CRITERIA FOR EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE-  
4 NESS OF APPROACH.—The Secretary, in consultation  
5 with the Secretary of Labor and organizations with  
6 experience in evaluating research on the effective-  
7 ness of various approaches in delivering services to  
8 move welfare recipients into work, shall—

9 “(A) establish criteria for evidence of the  
10 effectiveness of the approaches used in the dem-  
11 onstration projects; and

12 “(B) ensure that the process for estab-  
13 lishing the criteria—

14 “(i) is transparent;

15 “(ii) is consistent across agencies;

16 “(iii) provides opportunity for public  
17 comment; and

18 “(iv) takes into account efforts of  
19 Federal agencies to identify and publicize  
20 effective interventions, including efforts at  
21 the Department of Health and Human  
22 Services, the Department of Education,  
23 and the Department of Justice.

24 “(3) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

1           “(A) APPROACH.—The term ‘approach’  
2 means a process, product, strategy, or practice  
3 that is—

4           “(i) research-based, based on the re-  
5 sults of one or more empirical studies, and  
6 linked to program-determined outcomes;  
7 and

8           “(ii) evaluated using rigorous research  
9 designs.

10          “(B) PROVEN APPROACH.—The term  
11 ‘proven approach’ means an approach used in a  
12 demonstration project conducted under this sec-  
13 tion that—

14          “(i) meets the requirements of a  
15 promising approach; and

16          “(ii) has demonstrated significant  
17 positive outcomes at more than 1 site in  
18 terms of increasing work and earnings of  
19 participants, reducing poverty and depend-  
20 ence, or strengthening families.

21          “(C) PROMISING APPROACH.—The term  
22 ‘promising approach’ means an approach used  
23 in a demonstration project conducted under this  
24 section—

1           “(i) that has been used in the project  
2 or elsewhere for at least 3 years;

3           “(ii) that meets the requirements of  
4 subparagraph (D)(i);

5           “(iii) that has been evaluated using  
6 well-designed and rigorous randomized  
7 controlled or quasi-experimental research  
8 designs;

9           “(iv) that has demonstrated signifi-  
10 cant positive outcomes at only 1 site in  
11 terms of increasing work and earnings of  
12 participants, reducing poverty and depend-  
13 ence, or strengthening families; and

14           “(v) under which the benefits of the  
15 positive outcomes have exceeded the costs  
16 of achieving the outcomes.

17           “(D) DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH.—The  
18 term ‘developmental approach’ means an ap-  
19 proach used in a demonstration project con-  
20 ducted under this section that—

21           “(i) is research-based, grounded in  
22 relevant empirically based knowledge, and  
23 linked to program-determined outcomes;

24           “(ii) is evaluated using rigorous re-  
25 search designs; and

1                   “(iii) has yet to demonstrate a signifi-  
2                   cant positive outcome in terms of increas-  
3                   ing work and earnings of participants in a  
4                   cost-effective way.

5                   “(4) FUNDING.—Of the amounts made avail-  
6                   able to carry out section 403(b) for fiscal year 2018  
7                   and each succeeding fiscal year, the Secretary shall  
8                   reserve such funds as are necessary to carry out this  
9                   subsection.”.

10 **SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

11                   The amendment made by this Act shall take effect  
12 on October 1, 2017.

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