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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to award grants for peer mental health first aid, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. BALINT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to award grants for peer mental health first aid, 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 “Peer Education and
5 Emergency Response for Mental Health Act of 2025” or
6 the “PEER Mental Health Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANTS FOR PEER MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID.**

2 Title V of the Public Health Service Act is amended
3 by inserting after section 520J of such Act (42 U.S.C.
4 290bb–41) the following:

5 **“SEC. 520J–1. GRANTS FOR PEER MENTAL HEALTH FIRST**
6 **AID.**

7 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award
8 grants to eligible entities—

9 “(1) to train teachers, other relevant school
10 personnel (including education support profes-
11 sionals), students, and parents and caregivers of stu-
12 dents—

13 “(A) to recognize symptoms of childhood
14 and adolescent mental health conditions;

15 “(B) to refer students to appropriate men-
16 tal health services if necessary; and

17 “(C) to recognize signs of immediate men-
18 tal distress and, upon recognizing such signs
19 apply mental health first aid tactics; and

20 “(2) to provide education to such teachers, per-
21 sonnel, students, parents, and caregivers regarding
22 resources that are available in the community for in-
23 dividuals with a mental illness.

24 “(b) RELATION TO OTHER MENTAL HEALTH
25 AWARENESS TRAINING GRANTS.—An eligible entity may
26 receive grant funds under this section in addition to re-

1 ceiving amounts made available to such eligible entity pur-
2 suant to section 520J.

3 “(c) ALLOCATION FOR SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—In awarding grants under
5 this section, the Secretary shall award not less than
6 25 percent of the amounts made available to carry
7 out this section for a fiscal year to eligible entities
8 that are elementary schools or secondary schools in
9 rural areas or that are applying for grants on behalf
10 of such schools.

11 “(2) REALLOCATION.—If the Secretary is un-
12 able to obligate the total amount of funds set aside
13 under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year due to a lack
14 of qualified applications from eligible applicants de-
15 scribed in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall reallo-
16 cate the remainder of such funds for making grants
17 under this section to other eligible entities.

18 “(d) APPLICATION.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To seek a grant under this
20 section, an eligible entity shall submit an application
21 to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and
22 containing such information as the Secretary may
23 require, including a plan for the rigorous evaluation
24 of activities that are carried out with funds received
25 through the grant.

1 “(2) STREAMLINED PROCESS.—The Secretary
2 shall streamline the process for applying for a grant
3 under this section so as to keep such process from
4 imposing an unreasonable barrier, especially for eli-
5 gible entities with limited personnel available to pre-
6 pare a grant application.

7 “(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall
8 provide technical assistance to eligible entities applying
9 for, or receiving, grants under this section. Such technical
10 assistance shall include the development and dissemina-
11 tion of best practices for providing training and education
12 described in subsection (a).

13 “(f) DEFINITION.—In this section:

14 “(1) The terms ‘elementary school’, ‘local edu-
15 cational agency’, ‘secondary school’, and ‘State edu-
16 cational agency’ have the meanings given to those
17 terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Sec-
18 ondary Education Act of 1965.

19 “(2) The term ‘eligible entity’ means an ele-
20 mentary school, a local educational agency, a sec-
21 ondary school, or a State educational agency.

22 “(3) The term ‘rural area’ refers to a rural
23 area as defined by the Health Resources and Serv-
24 ices Administration for purposes of awarding rural
25 health grants.

1 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
2 carry out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
3 priated \$24,963,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through
4 2030.”.