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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH 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 or PEER
6 Mental Health Act of 2023”.

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 teachers, school personnel,
16 students, and their family members to appro-
17 priate mental health services if necessary; and

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

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

25 “(b) RELATION TO OTHER MENTAL HEALTH
26 AWARENESS TRAINING GRANTS.—An eligible entity may

1 receive grant funds under this section in addition to re-
2 ceiving amounts made available to such eligible entity pur-
3 suant to section 520J.

4 “(c) ALLOCATION FOR SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS.—
5 In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall
6 award not less than 25 percent of the grants to eligible
7 entities that are elementary schools and secondary schools
8 in rural areas.

9 “(d) APPLICATION.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To seek a grant under this
11 section, an eligible entity shall submit an application
12 to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and
13 containing such information as the Secretary may
14 require, including a plan for the rigorous evaluation
15 of activities that are carried out with funds received
16 through the grant.

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

23 “(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall
24 provide technical assistance to eligible entities applying for
25 or receiving grants under this section.

1 “(f) DEFINITION.—In this section:

2 “(1) The terms ‘elementary school’, ‘local edu-
3 cational agency’, ‘secondary school’, and ‘State edu-
4 cational agency’ have the meanings given to those
5 terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Sec-
6 ondary Education Act of 1965.

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

10 “(3) The term ‘rural area’ refers to a rural
11 area as defined by the Health Resources and Serv-
12 ices Administration for purposes of awarding rural
13 health grants.

14 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To
15 carry out this section, there is authorized to be appro-
16 priated \$24,963,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through
17 2028”.