

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4221

To require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to carry out a study to add to the scientific knowledge on reducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and well-being, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 30, 2019

Mr. RYAN (for himself and Mr. BOST) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to carry out a study to add to the scientific knowledge on reducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and well-being, 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 “Teacher Health and
5 Wellness Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) High levels of stress are adversely affecting
2 teachers' health. Teachers with high levels of stress
3 are less effective in raising student achievement than
4 their healthier peers.

5 (2) Elementary school teachers who have great-
6 er stress and show more symptoms of depression
7 create classroom environments that are less condu-
8 cive to learning.

9 (3) Stress is contributing to the high turnover
10 rate among teachers, which causes instability for
11 students and communities. This leads to higher costs
12 for school districts to train new teachers and hinders
13 students' academic success.

14 (4) School organization, low job autonomy, and
15 a lack of ability to access teacher leadership oppor-
16 tunities are main sources of teacher stress. If teach-
17 ers are unable to manage their stress levels, this
18 leads to lower level teacher instruction, which then
19 impacts student well-being.

20 (5) High teacher turnover brings down stu-
21 dents' math and language arts scores.

22 (6) According to a 2014 Gallup survey, 46 per-
23 cent of teachers experience high daily stress during
24 the school year. This percentage is tied for the high-
25 est rate of high daily stress among occupations and

1 is a significant increase from teacher stress levels in
2 1985.

3 **SEC. 3. STUDY ON REDUCING TEACHER STRESS AND IN-**
4 **CREASING TEACHER RETENTION AND WELL-**
5 **BEING.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National In-
7 stitutes of Health shall carry out a five-year study on re-
8 ducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and
9 well-being by implementing and analyzing the results of
10 any of the following programs:

11 (1) Workplace wellness programs that are de-
12 signed to improve teacher health, attendance, and
13 engagement.

14 (2) Social emotional learning programs that
15 help teachers improve student engagement in the
16 classroom.

17 (3) Teacher stress management programs that
18 improve teacher performance.

19 (4) Mentoring and induction programs during
20 the school year and teacher pre-service programs
21 that improve teacher well-being.

22 (5) Organizational interventions, such as prin-
23 cipal training programs, that reduce stress through
24 supervisor/peer support and increased opportunities
25 for teachers to participate in professional learning

1 communities, teacher leadership positions, and deci-
2 sion making regarding school interventions and man-
3 agement.

4 (6) Teacher residency programs that provide
5 mental health and psychological support.

6 (7) Complementary health approaches, such as
7 mindfulness meditation, that improve teacher per-
8 formance.

9 (8) School reorganization that creates the con-
10 ditions to facilitate the transmission and sharing of
11 knowledge among teachers.

12 (9) Other innovative evidence-based approaches
13 that reduce stress and increase well-being in the
14 teaching profession, which may include increased
15 compensation.

16 (b) REPORT.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
18 after the end of the study carried out under sub-
19 section (a), the Director shall submit to the Com-
20 mittee on Education and Labor of the House of
21 Representatives and the Committee on Health, Edu-
22 cation, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate a report
23 including—

24 (A) the results of the study carried out
25 under subsection (a); and

1 (B) recommendations for—

2 (i) decreasing teacher stress and in-
3 creasing teacher retention and well-being;
4 and

5 (ii) lowering stress-related health care
6 costs for teachers.

7 (2) AVAILABILITY.—The Director shall make
8 publicly available the report submitted under para-
9 graph (1).

10 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH APPROACH.—
12 The term “complementary health approach” includes
13 integrative health care, adjunctive health care, and
14 functional medicine.

15 (2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
16 the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

17 (d) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.—No ad-
18 ditional funds are authorized to carry out the require-
19 ments of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out
20 using amounts otherwise authorized.

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