

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 6526

To establish a STEM corps to enhance the STEM and computer science workforce of the Department of Defense and the defense industry, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 17, 2020

Mr. BANKS (for himself and Mr. KIM) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

---

## A BILL

To establish a STEM corps to enhance the STEM and computer science workforce of the Department of Defense and the defense industry, 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 “STEM Corps Act of  
5 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. STEM CORPS PROGRAM.**

7 Part III of subtitle A of title 10, United States Code,  
8 is amended by adding at the end the following new chap-  
9 ter:

1 **“CHAPTER 113—SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY,**  
 2 **ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS**  
 3 **CORPS**

“2200n. STEM Corps program.

“2200o. Administration of program.

“2200p. Service obligation for STEM Corps participants.

“2200q. Security clearance required.

“2200r. Refund for failure to complete program.

“2200s. Industry and institutional participation.

“2200t. Definitions.

4 **“§ 2200n. STEM Corps program**

5 “(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of De-  
 6 fense shall carry out a program to be known as the ‘STEM  
 7 Corps’ to enhance the STEM and computer science work-  
 8 force of the Department of Defense and the defense indus-  
 9 try. Under the program, the Secretary shall provide finan-  
 10 cial assistance to qualified students who pursue a bach-  
 11 elor’s or graduate degree in a STEM or computer-science  
 12 discipline in exchange for a commitment from such stu-  
 13 dents to work in the Department of Defense for a defined  
 14 period.

15 “(b) APPLICATION AND ENTRANCE EXAMINATION.—  
 16 To be considered for participation in the STEM Corps,  
 17 a qualified student shall—

18 “(1) submit to the Administrative Agency an  
 19 application at such time, in such manner, and con-  
 20 taining such information as the Secretary may re-  
 21 quire; and

1 “(2) achieve a passing score on the written  
2 exam developed and administered by the Administra-  
3 tive Agency in accordance with section  
4 2200o(a)(2)(B).

5 “(c) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

6 “(1) AMOUNT.—The amount of financial assist-  
7 ance provided to a qualified student under this sec-  
8 tion shall not exceed \$40,000 for each academic year  
9 during which the student is enrolled in a STEM or  
10 computer science degree program at a qualified in-  
11 stitution of higher education.

12 “(2) DURATION.—A qualified student may re-  
13 ceive financial assistance under this section for a  
14 maximum of two academic years.

15 “(3) USE OF FUNDS.—Financial assistance pro-  
16 vided to a qualified student under this section may  
17 be used only to pay the student’s cost of attendance  
18 at a qualified institution of higher education.

19 “(d) ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS.—As a condition of  
20 receiving financial assistance under this, a STEM Corps  
21 participant shall—

22 “(1) complete not less than 15 credit hours (or  
23 the equivalent) of postsecondary coursework in com-  
24 puter science;

1           “(2) maintain satisfactory progress toward  
2           completion of a bachelor’s or graduate degree in a  
3           STEM or computer-science discipline;

4           “(3) maintain a grade point average of not less  
5           than 3.0 on a scale of 4.0 (or the equivalent) while  
6           enrolled in such a degree program; and

7           “(4) meet such other academic requirements as  
8           the Administrative Agency determines to be appro-  
9           priate.

10          “(e) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROGRAMS.—The  
11       Secretary of Defense shall coordinate the provision of fi-  
12       nancial assistance under the authorities provided in this  
13       chapter with the provision of financial assistance under  
14       the authorities provided in chapter 111 of this title (per-  
15       taining to support of science, mathematics, and engineer-  
16       ing education), to maximize the benefits derived by the  
17       Department of Defense from the exercise of all such au-  
18       thorities.

19       **“§ 2200o. Administration of program**

20           “(a) ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY.—

21           “(1) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary of Defense  
22       shall establish or designate an organization of the  
23       Department of Defense to serve as the organization  
24       within the Department with primary responsibility  
25       for administering the STEM Corps program (re-

1       ferred to in this chapter as the ‘Administrative  
2       Agency’).

3               “(2) DUTIES.—Subject to the direction and  
4       control of the Secretary of Defense, the Administra-  
5       tive Agency shall—

6               “(A) select qualified students for participa-  
7       tion in the STEM Corps;

8               “(B) develop and administer a written ex-  
9       amination for applicants to the STEM Corps;

10              “(C) monitor STEM Corps participants to  
11       determine their continued eligibility for partici-  
12       pation in the program;

13              “(D) facilitate the placement of STEM  
14       Corps participants in positions within the De-  
15       partment of Defense and with defense industry  
16       sponsors, as applicable;

17              “(E) solicit, receive, and manage contribu-  
18       tions from defense-industry sponsors under sec-  
19       tion 2200s(a);

20              “(F) enter into memoranda of under-  
21       standing with institutions of higher education  
22       under section 2200s(b); and

23              “(G) carry out such other activities relat-  
24       ing to the STEM Corps as the Secretary of De-  
25       fense determines to be appropriate.

1 “(b) ADVISORY PANEL.—

2 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of De-  
3 fense shall establish an advisory panel to provide ad-  
4 vice and recommendations to the Administrative  
5 Agency on the matters described in subsection  
6 (a)(2).

7 “(2) MEMBERS.—The advisory panel shall be  
8 composed of the following members:

9 “(A) The Assistant Secretary of Defense  
10 for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, who shall  
11 serve as the chairperson of the panel.

12 “(B) One representative of the Depart-  
13 ment of Defense appointed by the Secretary of  
14 Defense.

15 “(C) One Member of the House of Rep-  
16 resentatives appointed by the Speaker of the  
17 House of Representatives.

18 “(D) One Member of the House of Rep-  
19 resentatives appointed by the minority leader of  
20 the House of Representatives.

21 “(E) One Senator appointed by the major-  
22 ity leader of the Senate.

23 “(F) One Senator appointed by the minor-  
24 ity leader of the Senate.

1           “(3) TERMS.—Each member specified in sub-  
 2           paragraphs (B) through (F) of paragraph (2) shall  
 3           be appointed for a term of two years.

4           “(4) MEETINGS.—The advisory panel shall  
 5           meet at the call of the chairperson or a majority of  
 6           its members not less frequently than once annually.

7           “(c) LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Of  
 8           the funds authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made  
 9           available to carry out this chapter for a fiscal year, not  
 10          more than \$500,000 may be used to pay the costs of ad-  
 11          ministering the STEM Corps, including any costs relating  
 12          to the advisory panel established under subsection (b).

13   **“§ 2200p. Service obligation for STEM Corps partici-**  
 14                           **pants**

15          “(a) SERVICE AGREEMENT FOR RECIPIENTS OF FI-  
 16          NANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—To be eligible to receive financial  
 17          assistance under section 2200n, a qualified student shall  
 18          enter into a written agreement with the Secretary of De-  
 19          fense under which the student agrees—

20               “(1) to accept placement in an internship with  
 21          a defense industry sponsor as described in sub-  
 22          section (b);

23               “(2) to accept and continue employment in the  
 24          Department of Defense in a Department of Defense  
 25          Laboratory as described in subsection (c); and

1           “(3) to accept any additional terms and condi-  
2           tions that the Secretary determines to be appro-  
3           prium.

4           “(b) INTERNSHIP WITH DEFENSE INDUSTRY SPON-  
5           SOR.—

6           “(1) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to the agreement  
7           under subsection (a)(1), each STEM Corps partici-  
8           pant shall complete an internship with a defense in-  
9           dustry sponsor before the student completes the sec-  
10          ond academic year of participation in the program.

11          “(2) TYPE OF POSITION.—As part of an intern-  
12          ship under paragraph (1), a STEM Corps partici-  
13          pant shall perform duties that require a security  
14          clearance and that directly support the Department  
15          of Defense.

16          “(3) PLACEMENT.—The Administrative Agency,  
17          in consultation with STEM Corps participants and  
18          defense industry sponsors, shall place each STEM  
19          Corps participant in an appropriate internship as re-  
20          quired under paragraph (1).

21          “(c) EMPLOYMENT IN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—

22          “(1) SERVICE OBLIGATION.—Pursuant to the  
23          agreement under subsection (a)(2), each STEM  
24          Corps participant shall accept and continue employ-  
25          ment in a STEM or computer-science related posi-

1       tion within the Department of Defense, which may  
2       include employment in a defense laboratory, for a  
3       period of not less than four years.

4               “(2) PLACEMENT.—The Administrative Agency  
5       shall consult with STEM Corps participants who are  
6       in the final year of a bachelor’s or graduate degree  
7       program to identify appropriate employment oppor-  
8       tunities for such participants within the Department  
9       of Defense. To the extent practicable, the Adminis-  
10      trative Agency shall consider the skills, training, ex-  
11      perience, and preferences of a STEM Corps partici-  
12      pant when assigning the participant to a position  
13      under paragraph (1).

14              “(3) TREATMENT OF SERVICE IN THE ARMED  
15      FORCES.—A STEM Corps participant may fulfill the  
16      service obligation under paragraph (1) through serv-  
17      ice in the armed forces.

18              “(4) CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT.—

19                      “(A) REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF ASSIGN-  
20      MENT.—After the conclusion of the first year of  
21      an assignment under paragraph (1), a STEM  
22      Corps participant may submit to the Adminis-  
23      trative Agency a request to be reassigned to a  
24      different STEM or computer-science related po-  
25      sition within the Department.

1 “(B) CONSIDERATION BY ADMINISTRATIVE  
2 AGENCY.—After receiving a request for a reas-  
3 signment under subparagraph (A), the Admin-  
4 istrative Agency, in consultation with the hiring  
5 authorities of the offices concerned, shall—

6 “(i) determine whether such a reas-  
7 signment would be appropriate; and

8 “(ii) based on such determination, ap-  
9 prove or deny the request.

10 “(5) RATES OF PAY.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
12 subparagraph (B), during the period of obli-  
13 gated service described in paragraph (1), each  
14 STEM Corps participant shall be paid as fol-  
15 lows:

16 “(i) FIRST THREE YEARS OF SERV-  
17 ICE.—For the first through third years of  
18 obligated service, each participant shall be  
19 paid at a rate of not less than the rate of  
20 basic pay for GS–6 of the General Sched-  
21 ule.

22 “(ii) FOURTH YEAR OF SERVICE.—  
23 For the fourth year of obligated service,  
24 each participant shall be paid at a rate

1 equal to the rate of basic pay for GS–10  
2 of the General Schedule.

3 “(B) EXCEPTION.—Subparagraph (A)  
4 shall not apply to a STEM Corps participant  
5 who fulfills the period of obligated service de-  
6 scribed in paragraph (1) through service as a  
7 member of the armed forces.

8 “(6) INCLUSION OF DEFENSE LABORA-  
9 TORIES.—Employment in a defense laboratory shall  
10 be treated as employment within the Department of  
11 Defense for purposes of this chapter without regard  
12 to whether the laboratory is operated by a con-  
13 tractor.

14 “(7) WAIVER OF VETERANS’ PREFERENCE.—  
15 The hiring authority of the Department of Defense  
16 organization concerned, may appoint, without regard  
17 to the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of  
18 title 5, United States Code, other than sections 3303  
19 and 3328 of such title, qualified participants to posi-  
20 tions in the competitive service at the Department of  
21 Defense.

22 “(d) EMPLOYMENT WITH DEFENSE INDUSTRY  
23 SPONSOR.—

24 “(1) IN GENERAL.—At the discretion of the Ad-  
25 ministrative Agency, a STEM Corps participant may

1 fulfill the fourth year of the service obligation under  
2 subsection (c)(1) through employment with a defense  
3 industry sponsor.

4 “(2) RATE OF PAY.—The Administrative Agen-  
5 cy shall ensure that a STEM Corps participant em-  
6 ployed by a defense industry sponsor under para-  
7 graph (1) receives pay at a rate that is not less than  
8 the equivalent of the rate of basic pay for GS–10 of  
9 the General Schedule.

10 “(e) TRANSITION ASSISTANCE.—The Administrative  
11 Agency shall provide advice and technical assistance to  
12 STEM Corps participants to assist the transition of such  
13 participants to long-term employment in the Department  
14 of Defense, other departments or agencies of the Federal  
15 Government, or the private-sector defense industry after  
16 the participant fulfills the service obligation under sub-  
17 section (c)(1).

18 **“§ 2200q. Security clearance required**

19 “As a condition of participation in the STEM Corps  
20 each STEM Corps participant shall be required to—

21 “(1) apply for and obtain a security clearance  
22 before the conclusion of the first academic year for  
23 which the participant receives assistance under the  
24 program; and

1 “(2) maintain such security clearance until the  
2 conclusion of the participant’s period of obligated  
3 service under section 2200p(c)(1).

4 **“§ 2200r. Refund for failure to complete program**

5 “(a) IN GENERAL.—A STEM Corps participant shall  
6 refund to the United States an appropriate amount, as  
7 determined by the Secretary, in the event that the partici-  
8 pant does not—

9 “(1) complete the educational program for  
10 which financial assistance has been provided under  
11 section 2200n;

12 “(2) meet the academic requirements described  
13 in section 2200n(d);

14 “(3) complete the service obligation described in  
15 section 2200p(c); or

16 “(4) obtain and maintain a security clearance  
17 as required under section 2200q.

18 “(b) TREATMENT AS DEBT.—An obligation to reim-  
19 burse the United States imposed under subsection (a) is  
20 for all purposes a debt owed to the United States.

21 “(c) WAIVER.—The Secretary of Defense may waive,  
22 in whole or in part, a refund required under subsection  
23 (a) if the Secretary determines that recovery would be  
24 against equity and good conscience or would be contrary  
25 to the best interests of the United States.

1 **“§ 2200s. Industry and institutional participation**

2 “(a) SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH DEFENSE  
3 CONTRACTORS.—

4 “(1) CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS.—The Sec-  
5 retary of Defense, acting through the Administrative  
6 Agency, shall seek to enter into agreements with  
7 qualified defense contractors under which—

8 “(A) the contractor will contribute not less  
9 than \$40,000 to the Administrative Agency, to  
10 be used to provide financial assistance to  
11 STEM Corps participants in accordance with  
12 section 2200n; and

13 “(B) in exchange for each contribution of  
14 \$40,000 under paragraph (1) for a year—

15 “(i) the Administrative Agency will, to  
16 the extent practicable, place one STEM  
17 Corps participant in an internship with the  
18 contractor in accordance with section  
19 2200p(b); and

20 “(ii) the contractor may be eligible to  
21 employ a STEM Corps participant in the  
22 final year of the participant’s service obli-  
23 gation in accordance with section  
24 2200p(d).

25 “(2) TREATMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS.—Any  
26 contribution of funds under subsection (a) shall be

1 credited to the appropriation or account providing  
2 the funds to carry out this chapter. Any amount so  
3 credited shall be merged with amounts in the appro-  
4 priation or account to which credited, and shall be  
5 available for the same purposes, and subject to the  
6 same conditions and limitations, as amounts in such  
7 appropriation or account.

8 “(b) AGREEMENTS WITH INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
9 EDUCATION.—The Secretary of Defense, acting through  
10 the Administrative Agency, shall seek to enter into agree-  
11 ments with institutions of higher education under which  
12 the institutions shall agree to such terms and conditions  
13 as are necessary to facilitate the participation of students  
14 of the institution in the STEM Corps.

15 **“§ 2200t. Definitions**

16 “In this chapter:

17 “(1) COST OF ATTENDANCE.—The term ‘cost of  
18 attendance’ has the meaning given that term in sec-  
19 tion 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20  
20 U.S.C. 1087ll).

21 “(2) DEFENSE INDUSTRY PARTNER.—The term  
22 ‘defense industry partner’ means a qualified defense  
23 contractor that has an agreement in effect with the  
24 Secretary under section 2200s(a).

1           “(3) DEFENSE LABORATORY.—The term ‘de-  
2       fense laboratory’ means a laboratory operated by the  
3       Department of Defense or owned by the Department  
4       of Defense and operated by a contractor or a facility  
5       of a Defense Agency at which research and develop-  
6       ment activities are conducted.

7           “(4) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—  
8       The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the  
9       meaning given that term in section 101 of the High-  
10      er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

11          “(5) STEM CORPS PARTICIPANT.—The term  
12      ‘STEM Corps participant’ means an individual  
13      who—

14               “(A) has received, or is receiving, financial  
15              assistance under section 2200n; and

16               “(B) has not yet completed the service ob-  
17              ligation described in section 2200p(c)(1).

18          “(6) QUALIFIED DEFENSE CONTRACTOR.—The  
19      term ‘qualified defense contractor’, for any year,  
20      means an entity awarded a contract with the De-  
21      partment of Defense for that year for an amount in  
22      excess of \$500,000.

23          “(7) QUALIFIED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDU-  
24      CATION.—The term ‘qualified institution of higher

1 education’ means an institution of higher education  
2 that—

3 “(A) provides an educational program in a  
4 STEM or computer-science field for which the  
5 institution awards a bachelor’s or graduate de-  
6 gree; and

7 “(B) has an agreement in effect with the  
8 Secretary under section 2200s(b).

9 “(8) QUALIFIED STUDENT.—The term ‘quali-  
10 fied student’ means an individual who—

11 “(A) is a citizen of the United States;

12 “(B) is between the ages of 19 and 31  
13 years old (inclusive), except that the Secretary  
14 may waive such age requirement on a case-by-  
15 case basis;

16 “(C) demonstrates an aptitude for tech-  
17 nical subjects and a propensity for public serv-  
18 ice;

19 “(D) before the beginning of the first year  
20 of participation in the program, will have com-  
21 pleted not less than 30 credit hours (or the  
22 equivalent) of coursework at an institution of  
23 higher education, which may include coursework  
24 completed at a junior or community college (as  
25 that term is defined in section 312(f) of the

1 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
2 1058(f)); and

3 “(E) for the first year of participation in  
4 the program—

5 “(i) in the case of an undergraduate  
6 student, will be enrolled in the third year  
7 of a bachelor’s degree program in a STEM  
8 or computer-science discipline at a quali-  
9 fied institution of higher education; or

10 “(ii) in the case of a graduate stu-  
11 dent—

12 “(I) will be enrolled in graduate  
13 degree program in a STEM or com-  
14 puter-science discipline at a qualified  
15 institution of higher education; and

16 “(II) is expected to complete  
17 such graduate degree by the conclu-  
18 sion of the academic year following  
19 the first year of participation in the  
20 program.

21 “(9) STEM.—The term ‘STEM’ means science,  
22 technology, engineering, and mathematics.”.

23 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

24 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
25 chapter 113 of title 10, United States Code, as added by

- 1 section 2 of this Act, \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2021 and
- 2 each fiscal year thereafter.

