

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.

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

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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