

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6521

To provide for hands-on learning opportunities in STEM education.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 2022

Mrs. HAYES (for herself and Mr. MCKINLEY) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

A BILL

To provide for hands-on learning opportunities in STEM
education.

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 “Supporting STEM
5 Learning Opportunities Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Developing a robust, talented, and home-
9 grown workforce, particularly in the fields of STEM,
10 is critical to the success of the United States innova-
11 tion economy.

1 (2) The United States educational system is not
2 producing a sufficient number of workers with the
3 necessary STEM expertise to meet the needs of the
4 United States industry in STEM fields.

5 (3) Hands-on and experiential learning opportu-
6 nities outside of the classroom are critical for stu-
7 dent success in STEM subjects and careers, stimu-
8 lating students' interest, increasing confidence, and
9 creating motivation to pursue a related career.

10 (4) Hands-on and experiential learning opportu-
11 nities can be particularly successful in inspiring in-
12 terest in students who traditionally have been under-
13 represented in STEM fields, including girls, students
14 of color, and students from disadvantaged back-
15 grounds.

16 (5) An expansion of hands-on and experiential
17 learning programs across the United States would
18 expand the STEM workforce pipeline, developing
19 and training students for careers in STEM fields.

20 **SEC. 3. HANDS-ON LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN STEM**
21 **EDUCATION.**

22 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 (1) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “elementary
24 school”, “high school”, “secondary school”, and
25 “State” have the meanings given the terms in sec-

tion 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(2) ELIGIBLE NONPROFIT PROGRAM.—The term “eligible nonprofit program”—

(A) means a nonprofit program serving prekindergarten, elementary school, or secondary school students; and

(B) includes a program described in subparagraph (A) that covers the continuum of education from prekindergarten through high school and is available in every State.

(3) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means the Director of the National Science Foundation.

(4) STEM.—The term “STEM” means science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are to—

(1) provide effective, compelling, and engaging means for teaching and reinforcing fundamental STEM concepts and inspiring the youth of the United States to pursue careers in STEM-related fields;

(2) expand the STEM workforce pipeline by developing and training students for careers in United States STEM fields; and

1 (3) broaden participation in the STEM work-
2 force by underrepresented population groups.

3 (c) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall, subject
5 to the availability of appropriations for such pur-
6 poses, provide grants to eligible nonprofit programs
7 for supporting hands-on learning opportunities in
8 STEM education, including via after-school activities
9 and innovative learning opportunities such as robot-
10 ics competitions and for the purposes of evaluating
11 the impact of such programs on STEM learning and
12 disseminating the results of such evaluations.

13 (2) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under the
14 program, the Director shall give priority to eligible
15 nonprofit programs serving students that attend ele-
16 mentary schools or secondary schools (including high
17 schools) that—

18 (A) are implementing comprehensive sup-
19 port and improvement activities or targeted
20 support and improvement activities under para-
21 graph (1) or (2) of section 1111(d) of the Ele-
22 mentary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
23 (20 U.S.C. 6311(d)); or

24 (B) serve high percentages of students who
25 are eligible for a free or reduced price lunch

1 under the Richard B. Russell National School
2 Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) (which, in
3 the case of a high school, may be calculated
4 using comparable data from the schools that
5 feed into the high school).

6 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
7 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
8 \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2026.

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