117TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

H. R. 5676

To amend title 18, United States Code, to establish an Office of Prison Education, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 22, 2021

Ms. Dean (for herself, Mr. Mfume, and Mr. Jones) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 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 amend title 18, United States Code, to establish an Office of Prison Education, 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 "Promoting Reentry
- 5 through Education in Prisons Act of 2021" or the "PREP
- 6 Act".
- 7 SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.
- 8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

- 1 (1) Over the course of an 8-year-period fol-2 lowing the release of individuals from Federal pris-3 ons, the United States Sentencing Commission 4 found that 49.3 percent of such individuals were re-5 arrested, 31.7 percent were reconvicted, and 24.6 6 percent were reincarcerated.
 - (2) The Bureau of Justice Statistics found that over a similar time period as described in paragraph (1), 83 percent of people released from State prisons were rearrested.
 - (3) A broad spectrum of prison education programming can prepare individuals for the contemporary workforce pre-release, ensuring that upon release the individuals are best situated to be productive members of their communities.
 - (4) Education for people in prisons has a clear public safety benefit, reducing recidivism rates by over 43 percent.
 - (5) Employment is 13 percent higher for individuals who participated in either academic or vocational programs in prison, and 28 percent higher for individuals who participated in vocational programs alone.
 - (6) During the first 3 years after an individual is released, each dollar spent on funding prison edu-

- cation programs reduces incarceration costs by 4 to
 5 dollars.
- (7) Prison education helps to improve the safety
 of the prison environment, not only for incarcerated
 individuals, but also for correctional officers and
 prison staff.
 - (8) A 2016 analysis of the Bureau of Prisons education programs found that the Bureau of Prisons spends 20 percent as much on inmate education as the nearest-sized State prison systems and experiences a proportionally low return.
 - (9) The 2016 analysis described in paragraph (8) also found that the Bureau of Prisons lacked the staff, programmatic strategy and alignment, budget, assessment, and educational support to effectively administer educational programs.
- 17 (b) Purpose.—The purpose of this Act is to create 18 a dedicated office within the Bureau of Prisons to—
- (1) improve the prison education programs pro-vided by the Bureau of Prisons;
- 21 (2) ensure access to quality education programs 22 across all Federal penal and correctional institu-23 tions;
- (3) create partnerships with education providers
 to offer quality programs; and

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1	(4) create a repository of research and best
2	practices for State and local correctional institutions
3	on quality education programs.
4	SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.
5	In this Act:
6	(1) Assistant director.—The term "Assist-
7	ant Director' means the Assistant Director for Pris-
8	on Education appointed under section 4142(b) of
9	title 18, United States Code, as added by this Act.
10	(2) Director.—The term "Director" means
11	the Director of the Bureau of Prisons.
12	SEC. 4. OFFICE OF PRISON EDUCATION.
13	(a) In General.—Part III of title 18, United States
14	Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 307 the fol-
15	lowing:
16	"CHAPTER 308—EDUCATION
	"Sec. "4141. Definitions. "4142. Office of Prison Education. "4143. Federal Prison Education Program.
17	"§ 4141. Definitions
18	"In this chapter:
19	"(1) Assistant director.—The term 'Assist-
20	ant Director' means the Assistant Director for Pris-
21	on Education appointed under section 4142(b).
22	"(2) DIRECTOR.—The term 'Director' means
23	the Director of the Bureau of Prisons.

"(3) DISABILITY.—The term 'disability' has the 1 2 meaning given the term in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 3 12102). "(4) High school diploma.—The term 'high 6 school diploma' has the meaning given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-7 8 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801). "§ 4142. Office of Prison Education 9 "(a) Purposes.—The purposes of this chapter are 10 11 to— "(1) ensure that all Federal penal and correc-12 13 tional institutions provide quality educational pro-14 grams for incarcerated individuals; 15 "(2) be a nationwide repository for research, 16 policies, and best practices on education in prison; 17 and 18 "(3) offer training and technical assistance for 19 State prison systems in implementing and admin-20 istering education programs in prison. 21 "(b) Establishment of the Office of Prison EDUCATION.—The Director shall establish within the Bu-23 reau of Prisons an Office of Prison Education, which shall be headed by an Assistant Director for Prison Education appointed by the Director.

1	"(c) Functions of the Office of Prison Edu-
2	CATION.—The Office of Prison Education required to be
3	established under this section shall ensure the provision
4	of educational services for incarcerated individuals in all
5	Federal penal and correctional institutions, including pro-
6	grams such as adult literacy, basic skills development
7	education toward a regular high school diploma or its rec-
8	ognized equivalent, postsecondary education, workforce
9	development, that leads to an industry-recognized creden-
10	tial, a certificate, or an associate degree, pre-apprentice-
11	ships, registered apprenticeships, career and technical
12	education, and expanded opportunities for individuals with
13	a disability, including by—
14	"(1) implementing the Federal Prison Edu-
15	cation Program under section 4143;
16	"(2) coordinating and standardizing quality,
17	evidence-based, and effective education programs in
18	prison and services across all Federal penal and cor-
19	rectional institutions;
20	"(3) coordinating relevant Federal agencies in
21	providing quality educational services, including by
22	consulting with the Office of Career, Technical, and
23	Adult Education of the Department of Education;
24	"(4) coordinating with the Secretary of Vet-
25	erans Affairs to identify and provide information to

- incarcerated veterans regarding potential eligibility
 for educational assistance under laws administered
 by the Secretary, including educational assistance
 under chapters 30 and 33 of title 38, United States
 Code;

 "(5) conducting research and issuing reports on
 - "(5) conducting research and issuing reports on education programs in prison, including on best practices, particularly as it relates to pedagogy and instruction of incarcerated people;
 - "(6) providing training and technical assistance for State prison systems to improve education programs in prison; and
 - "(7) coordinating with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, National Center for Education Statistics, the National Institute of Corrections, and other relevant agencies as designated by the Assistant Director in collecting and reporting Federal and State data on—
 - "(A) the number of individuals who enroll in and complete an education program in prison, including a regular high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a career and technical education sequence, or a postsecondary degree or certificate;

1	"(B) the number of individuals who do not
2	complete an education program in prison and
3	the reasons for non-completion;
4	"(C) any State or Federal prohibitions or
5	limitations on employment for individuals with
6	felony convictions who complete an education
7	program in prison;
8	"(D) the correlation between participating
9	in or completing an education program in pris-
10	on and continued educational enrollment, both
11	in-custody and post-release;
12	"(E) the correlation between participating
13	in and completing an education program in
14	prison with post-release outcomes, including job
15	placement, job retention, and recidivism;
16	"(F) the correlation between participating
17	in and completing an education program in
18	prison with in-custody outcomes, including en-
19	rollment in other education or training pro-
20	grams and reduction in citations;
21	"(G) the impact of the correlation de-
22	scribed in subparagraphs (C) through (F) on
23	overall corrections spending through factors
24	such as—
25	"(i) impacts on recidivism:

1	"(ii) spending on Federal penal and
2	correctional institutions and State prisons;
3	and
4	"(iii) other relevant factors; and
5	"(H) other relevant data.
6	"§ 4143. Federal Prison Education Program
7	"(a) Definitions.—In this section:
8	"(1) Demonstrated effectiveness.—The
9	term 'demonstrated effectiveness' means the past ef-
10	fectiveness of an eligible provider demonstrated by
11	providing—
12	"(A) performance data on its record of im-
13	proving the skills of eligible students, particu-
14	larly eligible individuals who have low levels of
15	literacy, in the content domains of reading,
16	writing, mathematics, English language acquisi-
17	tion, and other relevant subject areas; and
18	"(B) information regarding its outcomes
19	for participants related to program completion,
20	employment attainment, pursuit of additional
21	education, and other relevant factors.
22	"(2) ELIGIBLE PROVIDER.—The term 'eligible
23	provider' means an organization that has dem-
24	onstrated effectiveness in providing programs such
25	as adult literacy, basic skills development, education

1	toward a regular high school diploma or its recog-
2	nized equivalent, postsecondary education, workforce
3	readiness, apprenticeships, career and technical edu-
4	cation, and programing individuals with learning dis-
5	abilities, which may include—
6	"(A) an institution of higher education;
7	"(B) a local educational agency;
8	"(C) a community-based organization or
9	faith-based organization;
10	"(D) a volunteer literacy organization;
11	"(E) a public or private nonprofit agency
12	"(F) a nonprofit institution that is not de-
13	scribed in subparagraphs (A) through (E) and
14	has the ability to provide adult education and
15	literacy activities to eligible individuals;
16	"(G) a consortium or coalition of the agen-
17	cies, organizations, and institutions described in
18	any of subparagraphs (A) through (F); and
19	"(H) a partnership between an employer
20	and an entity described in any of subpara-
21	graphs (A) through (G).
22	"(3) Eligible student.—The term 'eligible
23	student' means an individual who is incarcerated in
24	a Federal correctional facility.

1	"(4) Institution of higher education.—
2	The term 'institution of higher education' has the
3	meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the
4	Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a))
5	"(5) Program.—The term 'Program' means
6	the Federal Prison Education Program required to
7	be established under subsection (b)(1).
8	"(b) Authorization.—
9	"(1) In General.—The Assistant Director
10	shall establish a Federal Prison Education Program
11	to develop and support partnerships between eligible
12	providers and Federal correctional facilities to pro-
13	vide quality educational opportunities to facilitate
14	successful community reintegration.
15	"(2) Selection of eligible providers.—
16	The Assistant Director shall select eligible providers
17	to partner with Federal correctional facilities to de-
18	velop quality education programs for eligible stu-
19	dents, such as—
20	"(A) adult literacy;
21	"(B) basic skills development;
22	"(C) education toward a regular high
23	school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
24	"(D) postsecondary education:

1	"(E) workforce development that leads to
2	an industry recognized credential, a certificate,
3	or an associate degree;
4	"(F) apprenticeships; and
5	"(G) career and technical education.
6	"(3) QUALITY PROGRAMS.—When determining
7	which eligible providers will be selected for participa-
8	tion in the Program, the Assistant Director shall—
9	"(A) consider the evidence that an eligible
10	provider demonstrates a strong record on stu-
11	dent outcomes and successful community re-
12	integration that shall include—
13	"(i) high rates of program completion;
14	"(ii) a demonstrated record of a re-
15	duction in recidivism rates, if available;
16	"(iii) success in securing employment,
17	if available;
18	"(iv) employment retention, if avail-
19	able;
20	"(v) housing stability, if available; and
21	"(vi) other relevant factors; and
22	"(B) give preference to eligible providers
23	that demonstrate success in the categories de-
24	scribed in subparagraph (A).

1	"(4) DIPLOMA MILLS.—The Assistant Director
2	will prevent diploma mills (as defined in section 103
3	of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
4	1003)) from participating in the Program.
5	"(c) Participation by Eligible Providers.—
6	"(1) In general.—An eligible provider that
7	desires to participate in the Program under this sec-
8	tion shall—
9	"(A) develop a quality program, in coordi-
10	nation with the Federal correctional facility
11	with which the institution is in partnership, for
12	eligible students, in which the Federal correc-
13	tional facility shall administer the logistics of
14	the program, such as—
15	"(i) scheduling;
16	"(ii) location and space;
17	"(iii) security; and
18	"(iv) other logistical factors;
19	"(B) ensure that all eligible students with-
20	out a verifiable high school diploma or its rec-
21	ognized equivalent receive adult literacy, basic
22	adult education, skills development, and edu-
23	cation toward a regular high school diploma or
24	its recognized equivalent; and

1	"(C) prioritize workforce development pro-
2	grams that prepare eligible students for in-de-
3	mand sectors or occupations from which they
4	are not legally barred from entering due to re-
5	strictions on formerly incarcerated individuals
6	obtaining any necessary licenses or certifi-
7	cations for those occupations, and in doing so,
8	providers shall—
9	"(i) consider State licensing require-
10	ments, administrative barriers, and waiver
11	provisions that will impact eligible students
12	in certain occupations when designing their
13	programs; and
14	"(ii) inform eligible students prior to
15	participation in programs of potential pro-
16	hibitions or limitations to licensing or em-
17	ployment upon release depending on the
18	program offered and the States in which
19	eligible students settle.
20	"(2) Information to eligible students.—
21	Eligible providers that participate in the Program
22	under this section shall, as applicable—
23	"(A) disclose to eligible students and the
24	Office of Prison Education information about
25	any part of the academic program developed

under this section that, by design, cannot be completed while a student is incarcerated, as well as the options available for an eligible student to complete any remaining program requirements post-release;

"(B) offer eligible students who are released while in enrolled in an education program in prison education the opportunity to continue the students' enrollment in the academic program and transfer credits earned if the student is released from the Federal correctional facility prior to completion of the education program;

"(C) inform eligible students of the academic and financial aid options available if the students are not able to complete the academic program while incarcerated, including whether the eligible students can continue in the program after release, transfer credits earned in the program to another program offered by the institution, or transfer credits earned in the program to another institution of higher education;

"(D) for eligible students who wish to continue their education upon release—

1	"(i) offer academic advising; and
2	"(ii) offer appropriate financial aid
3	counseling, including Federal and State fi-
4	nancial aid and student loan counseling;
5	and
6	"(E) offer eligible students career coun-
7	seling and job placement assistance upon com-
8	pletion of an education program in prison and
9	release from custody.
10	"(3) Information to the office of prison
11	EDUCATION.—An eligible provider that participates
12	in the Program under this section shall submit to
13	the Assistant Director—
14	"(A) a plan for providing academic and ca-
15	reer guidance to eligible students, as well as
16	transition services, to support successful com-
17	munity reintegration of such students; and
18	"(B) relevant information about the eligi-
19	ble students participating in the Program it re-
20	lates to subparagraph (A).
21	"(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Assistant Direc-
22	tor shall work with relevant Federal agencies to provide
23	technical assistance to eligible providers, and the Federal
24	correctional facilities with which they are in partnership,

1	developing new quality academic programs for eligible stu-
2	dents, or expanding existing programs.
3	"(e) Annual Report.—
4	"(1) In general.—An eligible provider that
5	participates in the Program, working with the Fed-
6	eral correctional facility with which it is in partner-
7	ship, shall submit to the Assistant Director an an-
8	nual report on the provider's academic program for
9	eligible students, including implementation and re-
10	sults.
11	"(2) Contents of Report.—Each annual re-
12	port submitted under paragraph (1) shall include in-
13	formation on—
14	"(A) courses and programs offered;
15	"(B) numbers, rates, and types of certifi-
16	cates and degrees awarded;
17	"(C) the partnership with the Federal cor-
18	rectional facility, including information on space
19	allocation, resources, staffing, and other rel-
20	evant information on effective collaboration;
21	"(D) the effectiveness of the various edu-
22	cation program's length, and the value of cre-
23	dentials or degrees earned with different credit
24	length;

1	"(E) the variance of different doses or
2	credit length by educational program;
3	"(F) the models of instruction, curriculum,
4	and other characteristics of program delivery
5	that are most effective in a correctional envi-
6	ronment;
7	"(G) challenges in providing programs and
8	courses in the prison settings;
9	"(H) how such challenges were addressed;
10	"(I) suggestions for the agency to assist in
11	addressing challenges;
12	"(J) impacts on the environment and safe-
13	ty of the correctional facility;
14	"(K) average and projected costs, overall
15	and per student, of the program;
16	"(L) student demographic data, including
17	age, gender, race, ethnicity, and security or cus-
18	tody level; and
19	"(M) other relevant data.
20	"(f) Evaluation.—
21	"(1) In General.—The Assistant Director, in
22	coordination with the National Institute of Justice,
23	the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Insti-
24	tute of Corrections, and the Secretary of Education,

1	shall conduct an evaluation of the Program that as-
2	sesses—
3	"(A) in-custody outcomes, including im-
4	pacts on tickets, segregation, program partici-
5	pation outside of education, and continued en-
6	rollment in the Program;
7	"(B) post-release outcomes of the Pro-
8	gram, including—
9	"(i) postsecondary enrollment in and
10	continuance of education by eligible stu-
11	dents after release;
12	"(ii) degree attainment from an insti-
13	tution of higher education;
14	"(iii) progress toward a degree in
15	credits or time;
16	"(iv) continued participation in edu-
17	cational programs after release;
18	"(v) factors related to the pursuit of
19	education, such as housing attainment; and
20	"(vi) other relevant factors;
21	"(C) the impact of the Program on safety
22	in correctional facilities;
23	"(D) the demand for participation in the
24	Program, including the size of waiting lists;

1	"(E) employment outcomes of participants
2	in the Program;
3	"(F) the impact of the Program on recidi-
4	vism; and
5	"(G) other relevant data.
6	"(2) DISAGGREGATION.—The data collected
7	through the evaluation required under paragraph (1)
8	shall, to the extent practicable, be disaggregated by
9	program provider to facilitate selection of eligible
10	providers under subsection (b).
11	"(3) Student outcomes.—The evaluation de-
12	scribed in paragraph (1) shall gather data on eligible
13	students while incarcerated and for the 3- and 5-
14	year periods post-release from incarceration.
15	"(4) Partnership.—The evaluation described
16	in paragraph (1) shall be conducted in partnership
17	with one or multiple external evaluators.
18	"(5) Publication.—Not later than 180 days
19	after the date on which the evaluations required
20	under paragraph (1) is completed, the Assistant Di-
21	rector shall—
22	"(A) submit the evaluation, including rec-
23	ommendations for Program improvements, to
24	Congress; and
25	"(B) publish the evaluation.

"(g) MATCHING FUNDS.—The Federal share of the 1 2 cost of an academic program carried out under this section 3 may not exceed 75 percent of the total cost of the aca-4 demic program. 5 "(h) Allocation of Funds.—For fiscal years 2020 through 2026, of the amounts appropriated to the Bureau 6 7 of Prisons, \$170,000,000 shall be used to carry out sub-8 section (b).". 9 (b) AMENDMENT TO DUTIES OF THE BUREAU OF Prisons.—Section 4042(a) of title 18, United States 10 11 Code, is amended— 12 (1) in subparagraph (D)— 13 (A) by striking "(D) establish" and insert-14 ing "(6) establish"; and (B) in clause (ii), by striking "and" at the 15 16 end; 17 (2) by inserting after paragraph (6), as so re-18 designated, the following: 19 "(7) establish the Office of Prison Education 20 required under section 4142; and"; and 21 (3) in subparagraph (E), by striking "(E) establish" and inserting "(8) establish". 22 23 (c) Table of Chapters Amendment.—The table

of chapters for part III of title 18, United States Code,

is amended by inserting after the item relating to section
307 the following:
"308. Education
SEC. 5. PRISON EDUCATION RESEARCH, POLICES, AND
BEST PRACTICES.
(a) In General.—The Assistant Director, in col-
laboration with relevant Federal agencies, including the
Department of Education, State correctional agencies,
State and local correctional institutions, civil rights orga-
nizations, criminal justice organizations, and research
agencies and organizations, shall establish and maintain
a clearinghouse for research, policies, and best practices
on quality education programs in prison.
(b) Information to the Public.—The Assistant
Director shall maintain information and resources on the
public-facing website of the Bureau of Prisons.
SEC. 6. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.
(a) In General.—The Assistant Director shall use
funds available to the Bureau of Prisons to provide State
correctional institutions with training and technical assist-
ance on developing and implementing policies and proce-
dures for quality education programs in prison.
(b) Partnership.—Federal correctional and penal
institutions with education programs in prison established
under section 4143 of title 18, United States Code, as
added by this Act, may partner with State and local cor-

- 1 rectional institutions and education providers located in
- 2 the same State or region to facilitate training and tech-
- 3 nical assistance to improve the quality of correctional edu-
- 4 cation offered in State prisons.

5 SEC. 7. PRISON EDUCATION FOR INCARCERATED VET-

- 6 ERANS.
- 7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
- 8 fairs, in coordination with the Director and State correc-
- 9 tional agencies, shall—

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- 10 (1) carry out a program of outreach to inform 11 veterans incarcerated in a Federal or State correc-12 tional facility about potential eligibility for edu-13 cational assistance under laws administered by the 14 Secretary, including educational assistance under 15 chapters 30 and 33 of title 38, United States Code;
 - (2) ensure that educational assistance under laws administered by the Secretary is available to a veteran who is incarcerated as described in paragraph (1) and otherwise eligible for the assistance;
 - (3) assist each veteran who is incarcerated as described in paragraph (1) and eligible for educational assistance under a law administered by the Secretary by connecting the veteran to one or more quality education programs in prison, including the Federal Prison Education Program established

1	under section 4143 of title 18, United States Code,
2	as added by this Act, when the veteran is incarcer-
3	ated in a Federal or State correctional facility that
4	provides one or more education programs in prison
5	that are approved for the use of such assistance;
6	(4) provide financial aid counseling related to
7	continued educational enrollment and matriculation
8	post-release; and
9	(5) compile and make available to incarcerated
10	veterans a resource guide for incarcerated veterans
11	that includes general information about the avail-
12	ability, post-release, of—
13	(A) educational assistance available under
14	laws administered by the Secretary; and
15	(B) job counseling, training, and place-
16	ment services available under chapters 41 and
17	42 of title 38, United States Code.
18	(b) Limitation on Provision of Educational As-
19	SISTANCE.—
20	(1) Monthly housing stipend.—A veteran
21	with a felony conviction who is incarcerated in a
22	Federal or State correctional facility may not re-
23	ceive, while so incarcerated—
24	(A) any monthly housing stipend under
25	section 3313 of title 38. United States Code: or

[(B) any amount under section 3014 of
2	such title otherwise payable to help meet the
3	veteran's subsistence costs.

(2) Costs covered by other programs.—
Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall reduce the amount of educational assistance that the Secretary would otherwise provide to a veteran described in paragraph (1) under a law administered by the Secretary for costs of tuition, fees, supplies, books, equipment, and other educational costs relating to pursuing a program of education while incarcerated by an amount equal to the amount that such costs are paid by another Federal, State, or local program.

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