

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2217

To increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 24, 2021

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. PADILLA, and Ms. ROSEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry.

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 “Women and Minorities
5 in STEM Booster Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPA-**
2 **TION OF WOMEN AND UNDERREPRESENTED**
3 **MINORITIES IN STEM FIELDS.**

4 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

5 (1) According to the National Academy of
6 Sciences, STEM education is critical to ensuring the
7 United States maintains a diverse and competitive
8 workforce.

9 (2) According to the United States Census Bu-
10 reau, women were still vastly underrepresented in
11 the STEM workforce in 2019: comprising nearly
12 half of the United States workforce (48 percent),
13 but only slightly more than a quarter of STEM
14 workers (27 percent).

15 (3) According to the National Science Founda-
16 tion, women only represent 28 percent of all science
17 and engineering workers: comprising 29 percent of
18 physical scientists, 25 percent of computer and
19 mathematical scientists, and 13 percent of engineers.

20 (4) According to the National Center of Edu-
21 cation Statistics (NCES), women are more likely
22 than men to switch out of STEM majors: 32 per-
23 cent, compared to 26 percent. NCES has also found
24 that while a higher percentage of bachelor's degrees
25 are awarded to females than males (58 percent,
26 compared to 42 percent), within STEM fields a

1 lower percentage of bachelor's degrees were awarded
2 to females than males (36 percent, compared to 64
3 percent).

4 (5) According to the National Action Council
5 for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., the United
6 States needs to increase the number of underrep-
7 resented minorities who become engineers in order
8 to remain competitive in a world of technological in-
9 novation.

10 (6) According to Asian Americans Advancing
11 Justice (AAJC), data on Asian Americans and Pa-
12 cific Islanders (AAPIs) tend to hide the fact that
13 certain AAPI subgroups are still underrepresented
14 in STEM: with Cambodian (9 percent), Laotian (8
15 percent), Hmong (8 percent), and Native Hawaiian
16 and Pacific Islander (7 percent) workers signifi-
17 cantly underrepresented compared to other workers
18 in the United States (12 percent).

19 (7) Data also tend to hide the fact that certain
20 subgroups are underrepresented in postsecondary
21 education: with Cambodian (18 percent), Hmong (17
22 percent), Laotian (16 percent), and Native Hawaiian
23 and Pacific Islander (15 percent) students receiving
24 a bachelor's degree or higher at lower rates than
25 other students (30 percent). Furthermore, certain

1 subgroups also experience poverty at higher rates:
2 with Hmong (28 percent), Cambodian (21 percent),
3 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (20 percent),
4 and Laotian (17 percent) households living below the
5 Federal poverty level at significantly higher rates
6 than the overall population (15 percent).

7 (8) Finally, NCES has found that women and
8 underrepresented minorities leave STEM at higher
9 rates than their counterparts, leading to a need to
10 develop resources to retain these groups in STEM.

11 (b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Director of the
12 National Science Foundation shall award grants to eligible
13 entities, on a competitive basis, to enable such eligible en-
14 tities to carry out the activities described in subsection (d),
15 in order to increase the participation of women and under-
16 represented minorities in the fields of science, technology,
17 engineering, and mathematics.

18 (c) APPLICATION.—Each eligible entity that desires
19 to receive a grant under this section shall submit an appli-
20 cation to the National Science Foundation at such time,
21 in such manner, and containing such information as the
22 Director of the National Science Foundation may reason-
23 ably require.

24 (d) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—An eligible entity
25 that receives a grant under this section shall use such

1 grant funds to carry out one or more of the following ac-
2 tivities designed to increase the participation of women or
3 minorities underrepresented in science and engineering, or
4 both:

5 (1) Online workshops.

6 (2) Mentoring programs that partner science,
7 technology, engineering, or mathematics profes-
8 sionals with students.

9 (3) Internships for undergraduate and graduate
10 students in the fields of science, technology, engi-
11 neering, and mathematics.

12 (4) Conducting outreach programs that provide
13 elementary school and secondary school students
14 with opportunities to increase their exposure to the
15 fields of science, technology, engineering, or mathe-
16 matics.

17 (5) Programs to increase the recruitment and
18 retention of underrepresented faculty.

19 (6) Such additional programs as the Director of
20 the National Science Foundation may determine.

21 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act—

22 (1) the term “minority” means American In-
23 dian, Alaskan Native, Black (not of Hispanic ori-
24 gin), Hispanic (including persons of Mexican, Puerto
25 Rican, Cuban, and Central or South American ori-

1 gin), Asian (including underrepresented subgroups),
2 Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander origin subgroup,
3 or other ethnic group underrepresented in science
4 and engineering; and

5 (2) the term “underrepresented in science and
6 engineering” means a minority group whose number
7 of scientists and engineers per 10,000 population of
8 that group is substantially below the comparable fig-
9 ure for scientists and engineers who are White and
10 not of Hispanic origin, as determined by the Sec-
11 retary of Education under section 637.4(b) of title
12 34, Code of Federal Regulations.

13 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
15 \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022, 2023, 2024,
16 2025, and 2026.

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