

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 637

To forestall the loss of research talent by establishing a temporary early career research fellowship program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 9, 2021

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. HIRONO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To forestall the loss of research talent by establishing a temporary early career research fellowship program.

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 Early-Ca-
5 reer Researchers Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The Nation’s universities and industrial re-
9 search labs are facing unprecedented budget pres-

1 sure as part of the COVID–19 health crisis, result-
 2 ing in considerably fewer openings for research and
 3 teaching positions.

4 (2) Emergency funding is needed to forestall
 5 the loss of research talent likely to occur if early-ca-
 6 reer researchers are forced to seek employment out-
 7 side of research due to the sharp economic decline
 8 caused by the COVID–19 health crisis.

9 **SEC. 3. EARLY-CAREER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National
 11 Science Foundation may establish a 2-year pilot program
 12 to award grants to highly qualified early-career investiga-
 13 tors to carry out an independent research program at the
 14 institution of higher education chosen by such investi-
 15 gator, to last for a period not greater than 2 years.

16 (b) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION DE-
 17 FINED.—The term “institution of higher education” has
 18 the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
 19 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

20 (c) PRIORITY FOR BROADENING PARTICIPATION.—In
 21 awarding grants under this section, the Director of the
 22 National Science Foundation shall give priority to—

23 (1) early-career investigators who are from
 24 groups that are underrepresented in scientific re-
 25 search; and

1 (2) early-career investigators who choose to
2 carry out independent research at a minority-serving
3 institution.

4 **SEC. 4. REPORTS.**

5 (a) REPORTS FROM GRANTEEES.—Not later than 180
6 days after the end of the pilot program under section 3,
7 each early-career investigator who receives a grant under
8 this Act shall submit a report to the Director of the Na-
9 tional Science Foundation that describes how the early-
10 career investigator used the grant funds under this Act.

11 (b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days
12 after the deadline for the submission of the reports de-
13 scribed in subsection (a), the Director of the National
14 Science Foundation shall submit a report to the Com-
15 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the
16 Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Tech-
17 nology of the House of Representatives that contains a
18 summary of the uses of grant funds and the impact of
19 the grant program under this Act.

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