

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9857

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education, as a condition of participation in programs under title IV of such Act, to establish a policy to award posthumous degrees to certain deceased students, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Mr. TONKO, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, and Mr. ESPAILLAT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education, as a condition of participation in programs under title IV of such Act, to establish a policy to award posthumous degrees to certain deceased students, 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 “Mel’s Law”.

1 **SEC. 2. REQUIREMENT TO AWARD POSTHUMOUS DEGREES.**

2 (a) POSTHUMOUS DEGREES.—Section 487(a) of the
3 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)) is
4 amended by adding at the end the following:

5 “(30) The institution certifies that the institu-
6 tion has established a policy to award posthumous
7 degrees to deceased students who—

8 “(A) had been enrolled in a degree pro-
9 gram at the institution;

10 “(B) died prior to completing such pro-
11 gram; and

12 “(C) at the time of death, were in aca-
13 demic standing consistent with the require-
14 ments for graduation from such program, as
15 determined by the institution.”.

16 (b) ACCREDITATION CRITERIA.—Section 496(a) of
17 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b(a))
18 is amended—

19 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (6) through
20 (8) as paragraphs (7) through (9), respectively; and

21 (2) by inserting after paragraph (5) the fol-
22 lowing:

23 “(6) the standards for accreditation of the
24 agency or association do not take into consideration
25 the number of posthumous degrees awarded by the
26 institution to deceased students;”.

1 (c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
2 this Act shall take effect on the date that is 1 year after
3 the date of enactment of this Act.

