

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 3259. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize and expand technical assistance and support for recovery community organizations and peer support networks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, today I rise to introduce the Peer Support Services Center of Excellence Act, a bipartisan bill that I have authored to help combat the vast and growing opioid epidemic. I want to acknowledge and thank Senator SHAHEEN for her leadership on this effort, and I look forward to continuing to work with her and others on this important legislation.

Last year in Maine, 716 people died from a drug overdose—a record number. Tragically, this was the third consecutive year that Maine set a record for fatal overdoses. Nationwide, nearly 110,000 Americans were lost in 2022 to overdoses. It is clear that we need to take an all-of-the-above approach to tackle this crisis. This includes support for education and prevention, treatment, law enforcement, and border security. No single focus will be enough on its own.

One ongoing challenge to reducing the number of overdose deaths is that far too often individuals suffer an addiction relapse. Indeed, a nonfatal overdose is a leading predictor for a future fatal overdose. We must do more to address this reality. Between 40 and 60 percent of individuals in treatment for substance use disorders relapse, and this rate is often much higher for those struggling with opioid addiction. Relapse rates are high, but that does not mean relapse is inevitable.

One way that individuals struggling with addiction are finding support is through peer recovery groups. In 2018, Senator SHAHEEN and I introduced the Opioid Peer Support Networks Act, much of which was enacted as part of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act that year. Our bill fostered the expansion of peer support networks through the creation of a National Peer-Run Training and Technical Assistance Center for Addiction Recovery Support. This center provides no-cost training and assistance to recovery community organizations, or RCOs, and peer support networks to integrate peer support workers into non-traditional settings, build and strengthen the capacity of RCOs, enhance the professionalism of peers through workforce development, as well as provide evidence-based and practice-based tool kits and resource information to stakeholders.

This national center has enhanced the field of peer recovery support services. Through the center's work, in fiscal year 2022, nearly 2,000 individuals were trained in how to support RCOs and peer support networks, and nearly

200 individuals were trained to provide specialized technical assistance, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of services provided by RCOs, and offer translation and interpretation services, data collection support, and capacity building expertise. This training is improving the services that are offered by organizations across our country, and the center has provided a platform for experts and recovery centers to learn from each other's experiences.

In peer support networks, individuals and families battling addiction help one another stay firm on the road to recovery by assisting with employment, education, housing, health and overall well-being. I have visited the Bangor Area Recovery Network, or BARN, in Brewer, ME, which is a volunteer-led organization that provides support to individuals recovering from addiction. BARN is a model for peer-led counseling and brings hope, recovery support, and healing to those struggling with substance abuse. Individuals who are themselves in recovery can make that critical connection to others facing addiction, which, in turn, can make the recovery process sustainable and reduce the stigma of addiction and treatment.

In recent years, in response to growing need and community efforts to expand recovery programming, Maine has seen the presence of RCOs like BARN grow across our State. As of January 2023, there were 19 recovery centers—from Sanford to Caribou—operated by people in recovery who are serving their local communities by offering peer-based support services, among other activities.

After touring BARN and other similar organizations, I believe the emergence of peer-based and other recovery support services is one of the most significant trends in the addiction field. Peer-based recovery support services are unique in that they cover a wide range of activities not generally offered by treatment providers. This includes recovery coaching, support groups, sober social activities, as well as housing, transportation, and employment services. In offering services beyond treatment, this model provides the strong support system that is essential to recovery. As one of BARN's core beliefs tells us, "A supportive community is vital to a successful recovery."

The Opioid Peer Support Networks Act brought critical training and assistance to these on-the-ground peer-to-peer networks and helped build up these important recovery support systems. Our new bill reauthorizes the National Peer-Run Training and Technical Assistance Center for Addiction Recovery Support that is set to expire, and it expands upon the work made possible by our bill that was enacted 5 years ago. In addition to reauthorizing the center, our bill would create a pilot program for a regional center of excellence that could assist the national center and tailor its work to the needs of a particular region.

We believe that the development of regional assistance programs, along with the continuation of a national center, will promote coordination and effectiveness of technical assistance delivery. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, utilizing a regional model to grow the national center's reach may be an effective way to triage and distribute technical assistance requests and ensure that all entry points are coordinated centrally by retaining the National Center.

Tackling the opioid epidemic, both its causes and consequences, requires a multi-pronged approach. The bipartisan bill I have introduced continues and builds upon one proven way to respond to this growing problem—supporting individuals in recovery through proven support systems.

I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 454—DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 8, 2023, AS "NATIONAL SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM) DAY" AND CELEBRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS IN EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, and Ms. SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 454

Whereas the Bureau of Labor shows that there are currently over 10,000,000 Americans employed in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) occupations in the United States;

Whereas STEM occupations are projected to grow more than 10 percent between 2022 and 2032 to nearly 11,500,000 jobs;

Whereas over 821,000 new STEM job openings will become available within the next decade;

Whereas, in 2018, only 20 percent of high school graduates in the United States were fully prepared for college-level STEM curriculum courses;

Whereas women are largely underrepresented in the STEM workforce and hold less than ⅓ of all STEM jobs;

Whereas the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics shows that, in 2021, Hispanic workers represented only 15 percent of the STEM workforce and Black workers represented only 9 percent; and

Whereas teaching STEM subjects to students in the classroom can help inspire them to consider STEM career paths: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates November 8, 2023, as "National Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Day";

(2) celebrates the importance of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in education and the workforce in the United States; and

(3) urges the people of the United States to observe National STEM Day with appropriate programs and activities.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 455—RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONGRESS-BUNDESTAG YOUTH EXCHANGE, THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FUTURE LEADERS EXCHANGE, AND THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KENNEDY-LUGAR YOUTH EXCHANGE AND STUDY**

Mr. KING (for himself and Mr. YOUNG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 455

Whereas 2023 marks the 40th anniversary of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (referred to in this preamble as “CBYX”);

Whereas CBYX was established by Congress to allow participants and communities to benefit from mutual understanding and the sharing of ideas;

Whereas CBYX participants represent the spirit, values, and diversity of the United States on an international stage;

Whereas CBYX provides high school students and young professionals in the United States and Germany with a valuable opportunity to live and study in the other country for an academic year;

Whereas, for the youth of the United States and Germany, CBYX strengthens ties between them, improves their career skills through formal study and work experience, and expands their perspectives and awareness of the culture, society, history, and politics of each other;

Whereas maintaining a strong, mutually beneficial relationship with Germany, a key ally, remains a top priority for the United States;

Whereas, since 1983, more than 29,000 students have participated in CBYX;

Whereas 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the Future Leaders Exchange (referred to in this preamble as “FLEX”);

Whereas FLEX was established by Congress after the fall of the Soviet Union to allow students from former Eastern Bloc nations to live and study in the United States;

Whereas FLEX students gain leadership skills, learn about the society and values of the United States, and teach the people of the United States about their home countries and cultures;

Whereas FLEX students perform community service in their United States communities and act as ambassadors of their home countries;

Whereas FLEX produces world leaders, including Rustem Umierov, the current Minister of Defense of Ukraine, who go on to promote democratic values on the world stage;

Whereas the best way to ensure long-lasting peace and mutual understanding between the United States and the countries of Eurasia is to enable young people to learn about the United States and the people of the United States firsthand;

Whereas, since 1993, more than 30,000 students from more than 22 countries have participated in FLEX;

Whereas 2023 marks the 20th anniversary of the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (referred to in this preamble as “YES”);

Whereas YES was established by Congress after the events of September 11, 2001, to build bridges between citizens of the United States and countries around the world, particularly those with significant Muslim populations;

Whereas YES participants from abroad live with volunteer host families in the United States, attend high school, and engage in

community service and civic education activities;

Whereas YES offers participants from the United States full scholarships for 1 academic year to live and study abroad in selected YES countries;

Whereas, since 2003, approximately 15,000 students from more than 45 countries have participated in YES and YES Abroad; and

Whereas CBYX, FLEX, and YES advance key foreign policy goals by empowering young people around the globe, supporting civil society and democratic ideals, and promoting mutual understanding between the United States and other countries: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes—

(A) the 40th anniversary of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange;

(B) the 30th anniversary of the Future Leaders Exchange; and

(C) the 20th anniversary of the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study;

(2) recognizes and congratulates all past and present participants of the programs described in paragraph (1); and

(3) encourages continued support by Congress and the President for the important mission of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the Department of State, which is to design, implement, and oversee educational, professional, and cultural exchange programs and public engagement activities to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries;

(4) supports the use of international exchange programs to build future leaders who can meet global challenges that promote mutual understanding, cross-cultural networks, inclusive leadership development, and civic education; and

(5) encourages families and high schools in the United States to consider opportunities to host youth exchange programs administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, including the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, the Future Leaders Exchange, and the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study, to help build mutual understanding in their communities.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 456—DESIGNATING NOVEMBER 2023 AS “NATIONAL COLLEGE APPLICATION MONTH”**

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KING, and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 456

Whereas equality of opportunity for all people is one of the noblest aspirations of the United States;

Whereas data on the benefits of higher education demonstrates that, in spite of ongoing barriers to access and student success, colleges and universities can still provide pathways to economic opportunity;

Whereas the United States built a thriving middle class by funding colleges and universities to provide avenues to individual economic opportunity and shared economic growth;

Whereas higher education enhances the economic mobility of individuals, which is evidenced by—

(1) a finding by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce that the median lifetime earnings of holders of an associate degree are uniformly greater than the median lifetime earnings of holders of solely a high school diploma; and

(2) a finding by the Pew Economic Mobility Project that, for an individual born in the lowest income quintile, obtaining a 4-year degree or a higher degree is associated with—

(A) an approximately 80-percent difference in the probability of that individual earning an income outside the lowest income quintile; and

(B) a threefold difference in the probability of that individual going on to earn an income in the highest income quintile;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that—

(1) the unemployment rate of recent high school graduates not enrolled in college was 18.3 percent, nearly 5 times higher than the overall unemployment rate of the United States;

(2) approximately 38 percent of 2022 high school graduates did not immediately matriculate to an institution of higher education the following fall semester, about the same percent as in 2021, and a 4.2 percentage point decline since 2012 in the rate of immediate matriculation of new high school graduates to an institution of higher education;

(3) the decline described in paragraph (2) was most notable among Hispanic and male high school graduates, who faced 12 percentage point and 6 percentage point declines, respectively, from 2012 in immediate matriculation to an institution of higher education; and

(4) the unemployment rate of adults with a bachelor's degree is nearly half that of the unemployment rate of adults whose highest credential is a high school degree;

Whereas the National Student Clearinghouse reports that overall undergraduate enrollment in colleges and universities continues to decline;

Whereas the complexity of financial aid systems and rising college costs can serve as additional deterrents or barriers for students and families as they assess the viability of higher education programs as a postsecondary option;

Whereas many students struggle to identify and compare postsecondary options due to—

(1) difficulties accessing school counseling services, which is evidenced by an estimation of the American School Counselor Association that the average student-to-counselor ratio in the United States is 408 to 1;

(2) an absence of reliable programmatic and institutional outcome data; and

(3) a lack of comparable and understandable college financial aid offers;

Whereas, in addition to expanding outreach and support to recent high school graduates, colleges and universities must also expand outreach and support to all undergraduate students;

Whereas applications for State-based financial aid are available in many States for students who do not qualify for Federal student aid; and

Whereas the data on the benefits of higher education underscores and reinforces the value of ensuring that all individuals, including students enrolled in high school and working adults—

(1) understand their postsecondary options;

(2) understand college financing opportunities; and

(3) have support to navigate the college application and financial aid processes: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates November 2023 as “National College Application Month”; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to—

(A) evaluate options for pursuing higher education;