

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4139

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve participation in higher education of, and increase opportunities in employment for, residents of rural areas.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 9, 2007

Mr. SPACE (for himself, Mr. HARE, and Mr. LOEBSACK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

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## A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve participation in higher education of, and increase opportunities in employment for, residents of rural areas.

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 “College and University  
5 Rural Education (CURE) Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.**

7 The Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001  
8 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following  
9 new title:

1 **“TITLE VIII—RURAL DEVELOP-**  
2 **MENT GRANTS FOR RURAL**  
3 **COLLEGES AND UNIVER-**  
4 **SITIES**

5 **“SEC. 801. PURPOSE.**

6 “The purposes of this title are—

7 “(1) to increase—

8 “(A) enrollment and graduation rates from  
9 2-year and 4-year colleges, and articulation  
10 from 2-year degree programs into 4-year degree  
11 programs of graduates of rural high schools;  
12 and

13 “(B) degree completion for nontraditional  
14 students from rural areas; and

15 “(2) to promote economic growth and develop-  
16 ment in rural America through partnership grants to  
17 consortia of rural colleges and universities and other  
18 entities, such as local educational agencies, employ-  
19 ers, education service agencies, and nonprofit organi-  
20 zations.

21 **“SEC. 802. DEFINITIONS.**

22 “For the purposes of this title:

23 “(1) **RURAL INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDU-**  
24 **CATION.**—The term ‘rural institution of higher edu-  
25 cation’ means an institution of higher education (as

1 such term is defined in section 101) that primarily  
2 serves rural areas.

3 “(2) RURAL AREA.—The term ‘rural area’  
4 means an area in which there is located a rural local  
5 educational agency.

6 “(3) RURAL LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—  
7 The term ‘rural local educational agency’ means a  
8 local educational agency (as such term is defined in  
9 section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-  
10 cation Act of 1965) that is designated with a  
11 metrocentric locale code of 41, 42, or 43 as deter-  
12 mined by the National Center for Education Statis-  
13 tics (NCES), in conjunction with the Bureau of the  
14 Census, using the NCES system for classifying local  
15 educational agencies.

16 “(4) NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT.—The term  
17 ‘nontraditional student’ means an individual who—

18 “(A) delays enrollment in an institution of  
19 higher education by 3 or more years after com-  
20 pleting high school;

21 “(B) attends an institution of higher edu-  
22 cation part-time or less than part-time; or

23 “(C) attends an institution of higher edu-  
24 cation and—

25 “(i) works full-time;

1 “(ii) is an independent student;

2 “(iii) has one or more dependents  
3 other than a spouse;

4 “(iv) is a single parent; or

5 “(v) does not have a high school di-  
6 ploma or a general equivalency diploma  
7 (GED).

8 “(5) REGIONAL EMPLOYER.—The term ‘re-  
9 gional employer’ means employers qualifying as busi-  
10 nesses or other entities employing individuals within  
11 a rural area.

12 **“SEC. 803. ENSURING COLLEGE ACCESS FOR RURAL HIGH**  
13 **SCHOOL GRADUATES.**

14 “(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Edu-  
15 cation is authorized to make grants in accordance with  
16 this section to partnerships formed between one or more  
17 rural institution of higher education and any of the fol-  
18 lowing entities:

19 “(1) One or more rural local educational agen-  
20 cies.

21 “(2) One or more rural education service agen-  
22 cies.

23 “(3) One or more regional employers.

24 “(4) One or more nonprofit organizations with  
25 expertise in rural education.

1       “(b) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIPS; APPLICATIONS.—To  
2 be eligible for a grant under this section, a partnership  
3 that meets the requirements of subsection (a) shall submit  
4 to the Secretary an application in such form and con-  
5 taining such information as the Secretary shall prescribe.  
6 In determining which applications to approve for a grant  
7 under this section, the Secretary shall consider—

8               “(1) the percentage of graduates, attendees, or  
9 former attendees of high schools from rural local  
10 educational agencies enrolled or otherwise affiliated  
11 with the entity;

12               “(2) in the case of employers, the percentage of  
13 employees that are graduates of high schools in  
14 rural local educational agencies.

15       “(c) USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS.—Funds made avail-  
16 able by a grant under this section to a partnership that  
17 meets the requirements of shall be used—

18               “(1) to improve enrollment rates for graduates  
19 and former attendees of rural high schools at rural  
20 institutions of higher education, including—

21                       “(A) programs to provide information  
22 about college costs and financial aid options, as-  
23 sistance with college enrollment applications,  
24 and assistance with financial aid applications;

1           “(B) programs or initiatives that provide  
2 such individuals of rural high schools access  
3 and exposure to campuses, classes, programs,  
4 and facilities of rural institutions of higher edu-  
5 cation, including covering the cost of transpor-  
6 tation to and from institutions of higher edu-  
7 cation;

8           “(C) the formation of groups or other ini-  
9 tiatives that create support groups of such stu-  
10 dents expressing interest in attending rural in-  
11 stitutions of higher education;

12           “(D) extra curricular activities, such as in-  
13 ternships, community service, and other activi-  
14 ties for such individuals in advance of attending  
15 institutions of higher education; and

16           “(E) other initiatives that assist such indi-  
17 viduals in applying and developing interest in  
18 attending rural institutions of higher education;  
19 and

20           “(2) to encourage participation of nontradi-  
21 tional students in degree programs at rural institu-  
22 tions of higher education, including—

23           “(A) programs to provide information  
24 about college costs and financial aid options, as-  
25 sistance with college enrollment applications,

1 and assistance with financial aid applications  
2 for institutions of higher education;

3 “(B) outreach to nontraditional students  
4 through community initiatives; and

5 “(C) formation of support groups for non-  
6 traditional students enrolling in 2-year degree  
7 programs and articulating from 2-year degree  
8 programs to 4-year degree programs.

9 **“SEC. 804. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS.**

10 “(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Edu-  
11 cation is authorized to make grants in accordance with  
12 this section to partnerships formed between one or more  
13 rural institutions of higher education and one or more re-  
14 gional employers.

15 “(b) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIPS; APPLICATIONS.—To  
16 be eligible for a grant under this section, a partnership  
17 that meets the requirements of subsection (a) shall submit  
18 to the Secretary an application in such form and con-  
19 taining such information as the Secretary shall prescribe.  
20 In determining which applications to approve for a grant  
21 under this section, the Secretary shall consider—

22 “(1) the potential of the employer to employ  
23 graduates of rural institutions of education after  
24 graduation;

1           “(2) the potential of the employer engaged in  
2           the partnership to spur economic development in the  
3           region; and

4           “(3) the relevance of the employer to the re-  
5           gional economy.

6           “(c) USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS.—Funds made avail-  
7           able by a grant under this section to a partnership that  
8           meets the requirements of subsection (a) shall be used—

9           “(1) to provide additional career training to  
10          attendees of rural institutions of education in fields  
11          relevant to the regional economy; and

12          “(2) to encourage regional businesses to employ  
13          graduates of rural institutions of education.

14   **“SEC. 805. QUALITY OF LIFE IN RURAL AREAS.**

15          “(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Edu-  
16          cation is authorized to make grants in accordance with  
17          this section to rural institutions of higher education.

18          “(b) USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS.—Funds made avail-  
19          able by a grant under this section to a partnership that  
20          meets the requirements of subsection (a) shall be used to  
21          create or strengthen academic programs to prepare  
22          graduates to enter into high-need occupations in the re-  
23          gional and local economies

1 **“SEC. 806. ALLOCATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 “(a) GRANT CONSIDERATIONS.—In making grant al-  
3 locations under this title to qualifying institutions and  
4 partnerships, the Secretary shall consider—

5 “(1) the percentage of graduates of rural high  
6 schools attending rural institutions of higher edu-  
7 cation in proximity to the entity receiving the grant;

8 “(2) employment needs of regional employers in  
9 proximity to entities receiving the grant; and

10 “(3) the health of the regional economy of the  
11 region surrounding the entity receiving the grant.

12 “(b) MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM GRANTS.—No grant  
13 awarded by the Secretary under this title shall be less than  
14 \$200,000 or more than \$500,000.

15 “(c) GRANT DURATION.—A grant awarded under  
16 this title shall be awarded for one 3-year period.

17 **“SEC. 807. GAO STUDY.**

18 “Commission a study to be completed in 5 years to  
19 identify the challenges and solutions to increasing the  
20 availability of and access to 4-year degree programs and  
21 institutions in rural America. The GAO shall investigate  
22 and make recommendations to Congress regarding—

23 “(1) the existing number of 4-year institutions  
24 of higher education and 4-year degree programs in  
25 rural America;

1           “(2) access to 4-year degree programs and in-  
2           stitutions in rural America;

3           “(3) the cost, availability of resources and chal-  
4           lenges associated with the establishment and expan-  
5           sion of 4-year degree programs in rural America;  
6           and

7           “(4) the role of rural America in contributing  
8           to overall bachelor’s degree attainment in the United  
9           States, as a measure of United States global com-  
10          petitiveness.

11 **“SEC. 808. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

12          “There are authorized to be appropriated—

13           “(1) for fiscal year 2009—

14                   “(A) \$15,000,000 to carry out section 803;

15                   “(B) \$10,000,000 to carry out section 804;

16           and

17                   “(C) \$5,000,000 to carry out section 805;

18           and

19           “(2) such sums as may be necessary for each  
20          of the 4 succeeding fiscal years to carry out such  
21          sections.”.

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