

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 144, with an Amendment
(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 144

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 2021

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas (for herself and Mr. LUCAS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

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:

1 (1) The Nation’s universities and industrial re-
2 search labs are facing unprecedented budget pres-
3 sure as part of the COVID–19 health crisis, result-
4 ing in considerably fewer openings for research and
5 teaching positions.

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

11 (3) The future of America’s defense will rely on
12 advanced technologies to maintain its military supe-
13 riority over its rivals, including China. These tech-
14 nologies will require new levels of scientific and engi-
15 neering aptitude and understanding. Early career re-
16 searchers will play a critical role in the development
17 of these technologies, and the loss of an entire gen-
18 eration of researchers due to the COVID–19 pan-
19 demic will be detrimental to the United States na-
20 tional security.

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

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National
23 Science Foundation may establish a 2-year pilot program
24 to award grants to highly qualified early-career investiga-
25 tors to carry out an independent research program at the

1 qualified institution of higher education chosen by such
2 investigator, to last for a period not greater than 2 years.

3 (b) SELECTION PROCESS.—The Director of the Na-
4 tional Science Foundation shall select grantees under sub-
5 section (a) from among citizens, nationals, and lawfully
6 admitted permanent resident aliens of the United States.

7 (c) OUTREACH.—The Director shall conduct program
8 outreach to recruit fellowship applicants—

9 (1) from all regions of the country;

10 (2) from historically underrepresented popu-
11 lations in the fields of science, technology, engineer-
12 ing, and mathematics; and

13 (3) who graduate from or intend to carry out
14 research at a variety of types of institutions of high-
15 er education, including—

16 (A) Historically Black Colleges and Uni-
17 versities;

18 (B) Hispanic-Serving Institutions;

19 (C) Tribal Colleges and Universities; and

20 (D) institutions of higher education that
21 are not among the top 50 institutions in annual
22 Federal funding for research.

23 (d) SPECIAL CONSIDERATION.—The Director shall
24 give special consideration to an application from an indi-
25 vidual who graduated from or is intending to carry out

1 research at an institution of the type listed in subsection
2 (c)(3).

3 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the con-
4 clusion of the second year of the pilot program, the Direc-
5 tor shall submit a report to Congress that includes—

6 (1) statistical summary data on fellowship
7 awardees disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender,
8 age, years since completion of doctoral degree, and
9 institution type;

10 (2) an assessment, drawing on feedback from
11 the research community and other sources of infor-
12 mation, of the effectiveness of the pilot program for
13 mitigating the loss of research talent due to the pan-
14 demic; and

15 (3) if determined effective, a plan for perma-
16 nent implementation of the pilot program.

17 (f) QUALIFIED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION
18 DEFINED.—The term “qualified institution of higher edu-
19 cation” has the meaning given the term in section 102
20 of the Higher Education of Act of 1965, except that such
21 term does not include an institution described in sub-
22 section (a)(1)(C) of such section.

23 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

24 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Direc-
25 tor of the National Science Foundation \$250,000,000 for

- 1 each of fiscal years 2021 through 2022 to carry out the
- 2 activities in this Act.