

[DISCUSSION DRAFT]

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act to make improvements in the program for awarding school choice scholarships to students in the District of Columbia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. FOXX introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

To amend the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act to make improvements in the program for awarding school choice scholarships to students in the District of Columbia.

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 “SOAR Act Improve-
5 ments Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANT DURATION AND APPLICATIONS.**

2 (a) EXTENSION OF GRANT DURATION.—Section
3 3004(a)(2) of the Scholarships for Opportunity and Re-
4 sults Act (sec. 38–1853.04(a)(2), D.C. Official Code) is
5 amended by striking “5 years” and inserting “5 years, and
6 may renew such grants for an additional period of not
7 more than 5 years, without a competitive process, when
8 the Secretary determines appropriate and desirable to
9 maintain continuity in the program”.

10 (b) CHANGES TO APPLICATION CONTENT.—

11 (1) NONINTERFERENCE IN REGULAR ADMIS-
12 SIONS STANDARDS OR PROCEDURES.—Section
13 3005(b)(1)(C) of such Act (sec. 38–
14 1853.05(b)(1)(C), D.C. Official Code) is amended by
15 striking the semicolon at the end and inserting “, if
16 such a process will not interfere with the regular ad-
17 mission standards or procedures of the school;”.

18 (2) CHANGE TO RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT OF
19 ELIGIBLE ENTITY BOARD MEMBERS.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—Section 3005(b)(1)(M)
21 of such Act (sec. 38–1853.05(b)(1)(M), D.C.
22 Official Code) is amended by striking “District
23 of Columbia” and inserting “Washington met-
24 ropolitan region”.

25 (B) WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN REGION
26 DEFINED.—Section 3013 of such Act (sec. 38–

1 1853.13, D.C. Official Code) is amended by
2 adding at the end the following:

3 “(12) WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN REGION.—
4 The term ‘Washington metropolitan region’ includes
5 the District of Columbia, the counties of Mont-
6 gomery and Prince Georges in Maryland, and the
7 counties of Arlington and Fairfax and the cities of
8 Alexandria and Falls Church in Virginia.”.

9 **SEC. 3. ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3007(a)(5)(A) of the
11 Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act (sec. 38–
12 1853.07(a)(5)(A), D.C. Official Code) is amended—

13 (1) by amending clause (i) to read as follows:

14 “(i) in the case of a school that is a
15 participating school as of the date of en-
16 actment of the SOAR Act Improvements
17 Act, is recognized by—

18 “(I) a national or regional ac-
19 crediting body; or

20 “(II) an accrediting body sited by
21 the Student and Visitor Exchange
22 English Language Program adminis-
23 tered by U.S. Immigration and Cus-
24 toms Enforcement; and”; and

25 (2) by amending clause (ii) to read as follows:

1 “(ii) in the case of a school that is not
2 a participating school as of the date of en-
3 actment of the SOAR Act Improvements
4 Act, is fully accredited by an accrediting
5 body described under clause (i) not later
6 than 5 years after the date on which that
7 school began the process of pursuing par-
8 ticipation under this division.”.

9 (b) REMOVAL OF COMPLETED REPORT.—Section
10 3007(a)(5) of such Act (sec. 38–1853.07(a)(5), D.C. Offi-
11 cial Code) is further amended by striking subparagraph
12 (B) and redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph
13 (B).

14 **SEC. 4. USE OF FUNDS.**

15 (a) EXTENSION OF FUNDS FOR USE IN PRE-KINDER-
16 GARTEN.—Section 3007(a)(3)(B)(i)(I) of the Scholarships
17 for Opportunity and Results Act (sec. 38–
18 1853.07(a)(3)(B)(i)(I), D.C. Official Code) is amended by
19 striking “kindergarten” and inserting “pre-kindergarten”.

20 (b) MAXIMUM SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT.—Section
21 3007(a)(3)(B)(ii) of such Act (sec. 38–
22 1853.07(a)(3)(B)(ii), D.C. Official Code) is amended by
23 adding at the end the following: “In any year, an eligible
24 entity receiving a grant under section 3004(a) has sole

1 authority to establish a maximum scholarship amount less
2 than the amount permitted in (3)(B)(i).”

3 (c) EXTENSION OF FUNDS FOR ADDITIONAL STU-
4 DENT ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3007 of such Act
6 (sec. 38–1853.07, D.C. Official Code) is further
7 amended—

8 (A) in subsection (b)—

9 (i) in the heading, by striking “AND
10 PARENTAL ASSISTANCE” and inserting “,
11 PARENTAL ASSISTANCE, AND STUDENT
12 ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE”; and

13 (ii) by adding at the end the fol-
14 lowing:

15 “(3) The expenses of providing tutoring service
16 to participating eligible students who need additional
17 academic assistance. If there are insufficient funds
18 to provide tutoring services to all such students in
19 a year, the eligible entity shall give priority in such
20 year to students who previously attended an elemen-
21 tary school or secondary school identified as one of
22 the lowest-performing schools under the District of
23 Columbia’s accountability system.”;

24 (B) by striking subsection (c) and redesign-
25 nating subsection (d) as subsection (c); and

1 (C) in subsection (c), as so redesignated—

2 (i) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking

3 “subsections (b) and (c)” and inserting

4 “subsection (b)”; and

5 (ii) in paragraph (3), by striking

6 “subsections (b) and (c)” and inserting

7 “subsection (b)”.

8 (2) INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF FUNDS.—Section
9 3007(b) of such Act (sec. 38–1853.07(b), D.C. Offi-
10 cial Code) is further amended in the matter pre-
11 ceding paragraph (1), by striking “\$2,000,000” and
12 inserting “\$2,200,000”;

13 (3) REMOVAL OF COMPLETED STUDY.—Section
14 3007(b)(1) of such Act (sec. 38–1853.07(b)(1), D.C.
15 Official Code) is further amended—

16 (A) in subparagraph (E), by striking “;
17 and” and inserting a period; and

18 (B) by striking subparagraph (F).

19 **SEC. 5. STANDARDIZED TESTING REQUIREMENTS.**

20 Section 3008(h) of the Scholarships for Opportunity
21 and Results Act (sec. 38–1853.08(h), D.C. Official Code)
22 is amended—

23 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “section
24 3009(a)(2)(A)(i)” and inserting “section 3009(a)”;

1 (2) by amending paragraph (2) to read as fol-
2 lows:

3 “(2) ADMINISTRATION OF TESTS.—The Insti-
4 tute of Education Sciences may administer assess-
5 ments to students participating in the evaluation
6 under section 3009(a) for the purpose of conducting
7 the evaluation under such section.”; and

8 (3) in paragraph (3), by striking “the nation-
9 ally norm-referenced standardized test described in
10 paragraph (2)” and inserting “a nationally norm-
11 referenced standardized test”.

12 **SEC. 6. EVALUATIONS.**

13 (a) MODIFICATION IN EVALUATION FREQUENCY.—
14 Section 3009(a)(1)(A) of the Scholarships for Opportunity
15 and Results Act (sec. 38–1853.09(a)(1)(A), D.C. Official
16 Code) is amended to read as follows:

17 “(A) jointly enter into an agreement with
18 the Institute of Education Sciences of the De-
19 partment of Education to—

20 “(i) conduct an evaluation of the op-
21 portunity scholarship program under this
22 division; and

23 “(ii) not later than January 1, 2027,
24 and every 7 years thereafter, issue a public

1 report on the opportunity scholarship pro-
2 gram under this division.”.

3 (b) RESPONSIBILITY OF SECRETARY.—

4 (1) ENSURING EVALUATIONS ARE RIGOROUS.—
5 Section 3009(a)(2)(A)(i) of such Act (sec. 38–
6 1853.09(a)(2)(A)(i), D.C. Official Code) is amended
7 to read as follows:

8 “(i) is rigorous; and”.

9 (2) ENSURING PROPER INFORMATION IS MADE
10 PUBLIC.—Section 3009(a)(2)(B) of such Act (sec.
11 38–1853.09(a)(2)(B), D.C. Official Code) is amend-
12 ed to read as follows:

13 “(B) disseminate information on the im-
14 pact of the program on academic progress and
15 educational attainment.”.

16 (c) RESPONSIBILITY OF INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
17 SCIENCES.—

18 (1) EVALUATION OF PARTICIPATING ELIGIBLE
19 STUDENTS.—Section 3009(a)(3) of such Act (sec.
20 38–1853.09(a)(3), D.C. Official Code) is amended—

21 (A) by amending subparagraph (A) to read
22 as follows:

23 “(A) assess the academic progress of par-
24 ticipating eligible students who use an oppor-

1 tunity scholarship in each of grades 3 through
2 8;” and

3 (B) by striking subparagraph (B) and re-
4 designating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph
5 (B).

6 (2) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section
7 3009(a)(3) of such Act (sec. 38–1853.09(a)(3), D.C.
8 Official Code) is further amended in the heading, by
9 striking “ON EDUCATION” and inserting “OF EDU-
10 CATION”.

11 (d) ISSUES TO BE EVALUATED.—Section 3009(a)(4)
12 of such Act (sec. 38–1853.09(a)(4), D.C. Official Code)
13 is amended—

14 (1) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as
15 follows:

16 “(A) The academic progress of partici-
17 pating eligible students who use an opportunity
18 scholarship compared to the academic progress
19 of a comparison group of students with similar
20 backgrounds, which may include students in the
21 District of Columbia public schools and the Dis-
22 trict of Columbia public charter schools.”;

23 (2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “increas-
24 ing the satisfaction of such parents and students

1 with their choice” and inserting “the satisfaction of
2 those parents and students with the program”;

3 (3) by amending subparagraph (D) to read as
4 follows:

5 “(D) The high school graduation rates,
6 college enrollment rates, college persistence
7 rates, and college graduation rates of partici-
8 pating eligible students who use an opportunity
9 scholarship compared with the rates of public
10 school students described in subparagraph (A),
11 to the extent practicable.”;

12 (4) by amending subparagraph (E) to read as
13 follows:

14 “(E) The safety of the schools attended by
15 participating eligible students who use an op-
16 portunity scholarship compared with the schools
17 attended by public school students described in
18 subparagraph (A), to the extent practicable.”;

19 (5) by striking subparagraphs (F) and (G); and

20 (6) by redesignating subparagraph (H) as sub-
21 paragraph (F).

22 (e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
23 this section shall apply with respect to evaluations carried
24 out on or after the expiration of the 2-year period begin-
25 ning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 7. REPORT BY ENTITY RECEIVING FUNDS.**

2 (a) CHANGE TO CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Section
3 3010 of the Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act
4 (sec. 38–1853.10, D.C. Official Code) is amended—

5 (1) in subsection (b)(1)—

6 (A) by striking subparagraph (A); and

7 (B) by redesignating subparagraphs (B)
8 and (C) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respec-
9 tively; and

10 (2) in subsection (c)(1)—

11 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “ag-
12 gregate academic achievement of other partici-
13 pating students at the student’s school in the
14 same grade or level, as appropriate, and the”;
15 and

16 (B) by amending subparagraph (B) to read
17 as follows:

18 “(B) any incidents of school violence, stu-
19 dent suspensions, and student expulsions; and”.

20 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made this
21 section shall apply with respect to reports submitted for
22 school years beginning on or after the date of the enact-
23 ment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 8. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-**
2 **TION.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3014 of the Scholarships
4 for Opportunity and Results Act (sec. 38–1853.14, D.C.
5 Official Code) is amended in subsection (a)—

6 (1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by
7 striking “through fiscal year 2023” and inserting
8 “through fiscal year 2032”;

9 (2) in paragraph (1), by striking “one-third”
10 and inserting “one-half”; and

11 (3) in paragraph (2), by striking “one-third”
12 and inserting “one-sixth”.

13 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
14 this section shall apply beginning with respect to fiscal
15 year 2024.