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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

To require the Secretary of Education to establish a pilot program to award grants to eligible organizations to carry out activities related to book access, and for other purposes.

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**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mrs. FOUSHEE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**A BILL**

To require the Secretary of Education to establish a pilot program to award grants to eligible organizations to carry out activities related to book access, 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 the “Empowering Young  
5       Readers Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. PILOT PROGRAM FOR BOOK ACCESS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
3 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Education  
4 shall establish a pilot program to award grants, on a com-  
5 petitive basis, to eligible organizations to carry out the ac-  
6 tivities described in subsection (c).

7 (b) APPLICATION.—An eligible organization desiring  
8 a grant under this section shall submit an application to  
9 the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and con-  
10 taining such information as the Secretary may reasonably  
11 require, including—

12 (1) information about past work the eligible or-  
13 ganization has performed related to book access;

14 (2) a comprehensive strategic plan for how the  
15 eligible organization would use a grant under this  
16 section to carry out one or more of the activities de-  
17 scribed in subsection (c), including a description of  
18 how such activities would address the needs of the  
19 community served by the eligible organization; and

20 (3) a letter from a leader in the community  
21 served by the eligible organization in support of the  
22 eligible organization and the comprehensive strategic  
23 plan.

24 (c) ACTIVITIES.—Grant funds awarded under this  
25 section shall be used by an eligible entity to carry out one  
26 or more of the following activities:

1           (1) Purchasing or otherwise acquiring new or  
2       used books for distribution to children.

3           (2) Distributing new or used books to children,  
4       including through delivery or in-person events.

5           (3) Donating new or used books to public li-  
6       braries.

7           (4) Hosting or organizing literacy-related pro-  
8       gramming for children and their families, including  
9       book fairs, reading hours, book drives, and story  
10      times.

11          (5) Any other activity the Secretary determines  
12      appropriate related to book access.

13      (d) GRANT AMOUNTS AND DURATION.—A grant  
14   under this section—

15          (1) shall be in an amount that is not more than  
16      \$200,000; and

17          (2) shall be for a period of 2 years.

18      (e) VIEWPOINT-NEUTRAL.—In awarding grants  
19   under this section, the Secretary shall ensure that applica-  
20   tions submitted pursuant to subsection (b) are reviewed  
21   based on viewpoint-neutral criteria.

22      (f) REPORT.—Not later than 6 months after the  
23   grant period of the final grant awarded pursuant to this  
24   section expires, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a  
25   report on the pilot program, which shall include—

1           (1) qualitative data with respect to the activities  
2           carried out by grant recipients, including the num-  
3           ber of books provided to children and their families;  
4           and

5           (2) to the extent data is available, information  
6           about how child literacy rates in communities served  
7           by eligible organizations changed during and after  
8           such activities were carried out.

9           (g) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-  
10          tion may be construed as restricting, infringing upon, or  
11          otherwise interfering with the ability of a public library  
12          or other entity to reject all or part of a donation of books.

13          (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

14           (1) CHILD.—The term “child” means an indi-  
15          vidual under 19 years of age.

16           (2) ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATION.—The term “eligi-  
17          ble organization” means—

18                   (A) a nongovernmental organization; or

19                   (B) a nonprofit organization.

20          (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
21          authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection  
22          \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2026, to remain available  
23          through fiscal year 2027.