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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend part B of title IV of the Social Security Act to establish a competitive grant program to enhance the ability of evidence-based child welfare programs to meet the research standards set by the Family First Prevention Services Clearinghouse, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FEENSTRA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend part B of title IV of the Social Security Act to establish a competitive grant program to enhance the ability of evidence-based child welfare programs to meet the research standards set by the Family First Prevention Services Clearinghouse, 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 “Strengthening Evi-
5 dence-based Prevention Services Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM.**

2 Section 435 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
3 629e) is amended by adding at the end the following:

4 “(f) PREVENTION SERVICES EVALUATION PARTNER-
5 SHIPS.—

6 “(1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this subsection
7 is to authorize the Secretary to make competitive
8 grants to support the timely evaluation of—

9 “(A) services and programs described in
10 section 471(e); or

11 “(B) kinship navigator programs described
12 in section 474(a)(7).

13 “(2) GRANTS.—In accordance with applications
14 approved under this subsection, the Secretary may
15 make grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible enti-
16 ties to carry out projects designed to evaluate a serv-
17 ice or program provided by the eligible entity or an
18 entity in partnership with the eligible entity with re-
19 spect to the requirements for a promising practice,
20 supported practice, or well-supported practice de-
21 scribed in section 471(e)(4)(C).

22 “(3) APPLICATIONS.—

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity may
24 apply to the Secretary for a grant under this
25 subsection to carry out a project that meets the
26 following requirements:

1 “(i) The project is designed in accord-
2 ance with paragraph (2).

3 “(ii) The project is to be carried out
4 by the applicant in partnership with—

5 “(I) a State agency that admin-
6 isters, or supervises the administra-
7 tion of, the State plan approved under
8 part E, or an agency administering
9 the plan under the supervision of the
10 State agency; and

11 “(II) if the applicant is unable or
12 unwilling to do so, at least 1 external
13 evaluator to carry out the evaluation
14 of the service or program provided by
15 the applicant.

16 “(B) CONTENTS.—The application shall
17 contain the following, in a form and manner de-
18 termined by the Secretary:

19 “(i) A description of the project, in-
20 cluding—

21 “(I) a statement explaining why
22 a grant is necessary to carry out the
23 project; and

24 “(II) the amount of grant funds
25 that would be disbursed to each entity

1 described in subparagraph (A)(ii) in
2 partnership with the applicant.

3 “(ii) A certification from each entity
4 described in subparagraph (A)(ii) that pro-
5 vides assurances that the individual or en-
6 tity is in partnership with the applicant
7 and will fulfill the responsibilities of the
8 entity specified in the description provided
9 pursuant to clause (i) of this subpara-
10 graph.

11 “(iii) A certification from the appli-
12 cant that provides assurances that the ap-
13 plicant intends to comply with subpara-
14 graph (A)(ii)(II), if applicable.

15 “(iv) A certification from the appli-
16 cant that the applicant requires an exter-
17 nal evaluator secured by the Secretary pur-
18 suant to paragraph (5), if applicable.

19 “(v) Any additional information the
20 Secretary may require.

21 “(4) PRIORITIES.—In approving applications
22 under this subsection, the Secretary shall prioritize
23 the following:

24 “(A) Addressing, with respect to the clear-
25 inghouse of practices described in section

1 476(d)(2), deficiencies or gaps identified by the
2 Secretary in consultation with—

3 “(i) States, political subdivisions of a
4 State, and tribal communities carrying out,
5 or receiving the benefits of, a service or
6 program; and

7 “(ii) child welfare experts, including
8 experts with lived experience.

9 “(B) Maximizing the number of services or
10 programs to be included in the clearinghouse of
11 practices described in section 476(d)(2).

12 “(C) Timely completing evaluations and
13 the production of evidence.

14 “(D) Supporting services or programs that
15 are based on, or are adaptations to new popu-
16 lation settings of, a service or program with re-
17 liable evidence about the benefits and risks of
18 the service or program, as determined by the
19 Secretary.

20 “(5) AVAILABILITY OF EXTERNAL EVAL-
21 UATORS.—

22 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Before accepting ap-
23 plications under this subsection, the Secretary
24 shall make reasonable efforts to secure at least
25 1 entity to serve as an external evaluator for

1 any eligible entity that includes a certification
2 under paragraph (3)(B)(iv) with an application
3 under this subsection.

4 “(B) FEES FOR SERVICES.—The Secretary
5 and each external evaluator described in sub-
6 paragraph (A) shall—

7 “(i) agree to and establish—

8 “(I) the fees that the external
9 evaluator may charge to an eligible
10 entity to carry out an evaluation of a
11 service or program provided by the eli-
12 gible entity; and

13 “(II) the expected timeframe for
14 the external evaluator to carry out the
15 evaluation based on the needs of the
16 eligible entity; and

17 “(ii) make publicly available a speci-
18 fication of the fees and timeframe before
19 the Secretary accepts applications under
20 this subsection.

21 “(C) NO EFFECT ON CONSIDERATION OF
22 APPLICATION.—The Secretary may not consider
23 whether an eligible entity is in partnership with
24 an external evaluator described in paragraph

1 (A) in approving an application under this sub-
2 section submitted by the eligible entity.

3 “(6) REPORTS.—

4 “(A) BY GRANT RECIPIENTS.—Within 1
5 year after receiving a grant under this sub-
6 section, and every year thereafter for the next
7 5 years, the grant recipient shall submit to the
8 Secretary a written report on—

9 “(i) the use of grant funds;

10 “(ii) whether the program or service
11 evaluated by the project meets a require-
12 ment specified in section 471(e)(4)(C), in-
13 cluding information about—

14 “(I) how the program or service
15 is being carried out in accordance
16 with standards specified in the re-
17 quirement;

18 “(II) any outcomes of the pro-
19 gram or service; and

20 “(III) any outcome with respect
21 to which the service or program com-
22 pares favorably to a comparison prac-
23 tice; and

24 “(iii) whether the Secretary has in-
25 cluded the program or service in an update

1 to the clearinghouse of practices described
2 in section 476(d)(2).

3 “(B) BY THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary
4 shall submit to the Committee on Ways and
5 Means of the House of Representatives and to
6 the Committee on Finance of the Senate an an-
7 nual written report on—

8 “(i) the grants awarded under this
9 subsection;

10 “(ii) the programs funded by the
11 grants;

12 “(iii) any technical assistance pro-
13 vided by the Secretary in carrying out this
14 subsection, including with respect to the
15 efforts to secure external evaluators pursu-
16 ant to paragraph (5); and

17 “(iv) any efforts by the Secretary to
18 support program evaluation and review
19 pursuant to section 471(e) and inclusion of
20 programs in the pre-approved list of serv-
21 ices and programs described in section
22 471(e)(4)(D) or the clearinghouse of prac-
23 tices described in section 476(d)(2).

1 “(7) RESTRICTION ON FUNDING.—The Sec-
2 retary may not make a grant under this subsection
3 to an eligible entity that is a for-profit business.

4 “(8) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may pre-
5 scribe regulations to carry out this subsection.

6 “(9) FUNDING.—

7 “(A) AUTHORIZATION.—There are author-
8 ized to be appropriated to carry out this sub-
9 section \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025
10 through 2029.

11 “(B) LIMITATIONS.—Of the amounts avail-
12 able to carry out this subsection, the Secretary
13 may use not more than 5 percent to provide
14 technical assistance.

15 “(C) CARRYOVER.—Amounts made avail-
16 able to carry out this section shall remain avail-
17 able until expended.

18 “(10) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

19 “(A) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligi-
20 ble entity’ means any of the following providing
21 a service or program or, in the sole determina-
22 tion of the Secretary, able to provide a service
23 or program if awarded a grant under this sub-
24 section:

1 “(i) A State, a political subdivision of
2 a State, or an agency or department of a
3 State or political subdivision of a State.

4 “(ii) An entity described in subpara-
5 graph (A) or (B) of section 426(a)(1).

6 “(B) EXTERNAL EVALUATOR.—The term
7 ‘external evaluator’ means an entity with the
8 ability and willingness to evaluate a service or
9 program pursuant to paragraph (2) that is not
10 provided by the entity.

11 “(C) SERVICE OR PROGRAM.—The term
12 ‘service or program’—

13 “(i) means a service or program de-
14 scribed in section 471(e); and

15 “(ii) includes a kinship navigator pro-
16 gram described in section 474(a)(7).”.