H. R. 11

To address behavioral health and well-being among education professionals and other school staff.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

A BILL

To address behavioral health and well-being among education professionals and other school staff.

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 the Mental
5 Health of Educators and Staff Act of 2023”.

6 SEC. 2. DISSEMINATION OF BEST PRACTICES.

7 Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment
8 of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services
9 (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”), in consulta-
tion with the Secretary of Education, shall identify and
disseminate evidence-based or evidence-informed best
practices for—

(1) preventing suicide and improving mental
health and resiliency among education professionals
and other school staff; and

(2) training education professionals and other
school staff in appropriate strategies to support,
maintain, and promote their mental health.

SEC. 3. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS INITIATIVE ENCOUR-
AGING USE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUB-
STANCE USE DISORDER SERVICES BY EDU-
CATION PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER
SCHOOL STAFF.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation
with relevant stakeholders, including medical professional
associations, shall establish a national evidence-based or
evidence-informed education and awareness initiative—

(1) to encourage education professionals and
other school staff to seek support and care for their
mental health or substance use concerns, to help
such professionals and staff identify factors associ-
ated with risks for suicide and mental health condi-
tions, and to help such professionals and staff learn
how best to respond to such risks, with the goal of
preventing suicide, mental health conditions, and
substance use disorders; and

(2) to address stigma associated with seeking
mental health and substance use disorder services.

(b) REPORTING.—Not later than 2 years after the
date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall provide
to the Congress an update on the activities and outcomes
of the initiative under subsection (a), including a descrip-
tion of quantitative and qualitative metrics used to evalu-
ate such activities and outcomes.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry
out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated
$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2025.

SEC. 4. PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AMONG
THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE.

Subpart I of part E of title VII of the Public Health
Service Act (42 U.S.C. 294n et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating the second section 764 (42
U.S.C. 294s, as added by section 4 of Public Law
117–105) as section 764A; and

(2) by inserting after such section 764A, as so
redesignated, the following:
“SEC. 764B. PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AMONG THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE.

“(a) Programs to Promote Mental Health Among Education Professionals and Other School Staff.—

“(1) In general.—The Secretary shall award grants or contracts to eligible entities to establish or enhance evidence-based or evidence-informed programs dedicated to improving mental health and resiliency for education professionals and other school staff.

“(2) Eligibility.—To be eligible to receive a grant or contract under this subsection, an entity shall be a State educational agency, a local educational agency, an institution of higher education, or a consortia thereof.

“(3) Use of funds.—An recipient of a grant or contract under this subsection shall use funds received through the grant or contract to implement a new program or enhance an existing program to promote mental health among education professionals and other school staff, which may include—

“(A) improving awareness among education professionals and other school staff about risk factors for, and signs of, suicide and mental health or substance use disorders, in ac-
cordance with evidence-based or evidence-informed practices;

“(B) establishing new, or enhancing existing, evidence-based or evidence-informed programs for preventing suicide and improving mental health and resiliency among education professionals and other school staff;

“(C) establishing new, or enhancing existing, peer-support programs among education professionals and other school staff; or

“(D) providing mental health care, follow-up services and care by a licensed or certified mental health professional (including by means of telehealth), or a referral for such care or services by a licensed or certified mental health professional, as appropriate.

“(4) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants and contracts under this subsection, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities in areas with a high percentage of schools receiving financial assistance under part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

“(b) TRAINING GRANTS.—The Secretary may establish a program to award grants to institutions of higher education, State educational agencies, local educational
agencies, State or local governments, Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations, or other appropriate public or private nonprofit entities (or consortia of entities, including entities promoting multidisciplinary approaches) to support the inclusion in educator preparation programs (including administrator preparation programs), and in training, continuing education, or professional development programs for education professionals and other school staff, of evidence-based or evidence-informed strategies—

“(1) to address mental and substance use disorders; and

“(2) to improve mental health and resiliency among education professionals and other school staff.

“(e) GRANT TERMS.—A grant or contract awarded under subsection (a) or (b) shall be for a period of 3 years.

“(d) APPLICATION SUBMISSION.—An entity seeking a grant or contract under subsection (a) or (b) shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

“(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—An entity awarded a grant or contract under subsection (a) or (b) shall submit to the
Secretary an annual report evaluating the activities supported by the grant or contract.

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given to such term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

“(2) The terms ‘local educational agency’ and ‘State educational agency’ have the meanings given to such terms in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

“(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated $35,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2026.”.

SEC. 5. REVIEW WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATION WORKFORCE MENTAL HEALTH AND RESILIENCY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall—

(1) conduct a review on improving—

(A) the mental health of education professionals and other school staff; and

(B) the outcomes of programs authorized under this Act; and
(2) submit a report to the Congress on the results of such review.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—The review under subsection (a) may include—

(1) assessing the prevalence and severity of mental health conditions among education professionals and other school staff, and determining the factors that contribute to those mental health conditions;

(2) assessing barriers to seeking and accessing mental health care for education professionals and other school staff, and actions taken by State educational agencies and local educational agencies, or other organizations, as appropriate, to address such barriers;

(3) determining the effects of the COVID–19 public health emergency on the mental health of education professionals and other school staff and lessons learned for future public health emergencies;

(4) assessing programs and policies that promote mental health and resiliency among education professionals and other school staff, including programs and policies to strengthen mental health and resiliency among education professionals and other school staff; and
(5) assessing the efficacy of training programs for education professionals and other school staff that promote resiliency and improve mental health.

(c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—The review under subsection (a), as appropriate, shall identify best practices related to, and make recommendations to address—

(1) improving mental health and resiliency among education professionals and other school staff;

(2) removing barriers to mental health care for education professionals and other school staff; and

(3) strategies to promote resiliency among education professionals and other school staff in health care settings.

SEC. 6. GAO REPORT.

Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Congress a report on the extent to which Federal substance use disorder and mental health grant programs address the prevalence and severity of mental health conditions and substance use disorders among education professionals and other school staff. Such report shall—

(1) include an analysis of available evidence and data related to such conditions and programs; and
1 (2) assess whether there are duplicative goals
2 and objectives among such grant programs.