

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve college access  
and college completion for all students.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

\_\_\_\_\_ introduced the following bill; which was read twice  
and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve  
college access and college completion for all students.

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 “Access, Success, and  
5       Persistence in Reshaping Education Act of 2017” or the  
6       “ASPIRE Act”.

1   **SEC. 2. IMPROVING COLLEGE ACCESS AND COMPLETION**  
2                   **FOR ALL STUDENTS.**

3           (a) IN GENERAL.—Part G of title IV of the Higher  
4 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1088 et seq.) is amend-  
5 ed by adding at the end the following:

6   **“SEC. 493E. IMPROVING COLLEGE ACCESS AND COMPLE-**  
7                   **TION FOR ALL STUDENTS.**

8           “(a) DEFINITIONS.—Except as otherwise provided in  
9 this section, in this section:

10                   “(1) AVERAGE STUDENT-RELATED EXPENDI-  
11           TURE.—

12                           “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘average  
13 student-related expenditure’ means, with re-  
14 spect to the most recent fiscal year ending be-  
15 fore the October of an academic year, the total  
16 amount of an institution’s instructional expend-  
17 itures, student services expenditures, and the  
18 proportion of academic support expenditures  
19 that goes towards instruction, divided by the  
20 number of full-time equivalent students enrolled  
21 in the institution for the academic year.

22                           “(B) INSTRUCTIONAL EXPENDITURES.—  
23 The term ‘instructional expenditures’—

24                                   “(i) includes—

25   “(I) expenditures for the colleges,  
26 schools, departments, and other in-

1 instructional divisions of the institution  
2 and expenses for departmental re-  
3 search and public service that are not  
4 separately budgeted;

5 “(II) general academic instruc-  
6 tion, occupational and vocational in-  
7 struction, community education, pre-  
8 paratory and adult basic education,  
9 and remedial and tutorial instruction  
10 conducted by the teaching faculty for  
11 the institution’s students; and

12 “(III) expenses for both credit  
13 and non-credit activities;

14 “(ii) may include information tech-  
15 nology expenses related to instructional ac-  
16 tivities if the institution separately budgets  
17 and expenses information technology re-  
18 sources; and

19 “(iii) does not include expenses for  
20 academic administration where the primary  
21 function is administration.

22 “(C) STUDENT SERVICES EXPENDI-  
23 TURES.—The term ‘student services expendi-  
24 tures’—

1 “(i) includes expenses for admissions,  
2 registrar activities, and activities whose  
3 primary purpose is to contribute to the  
4 emotional and physical well-being of stu-  
5 dents and to their intellectual, cultural,  
6 and social development outside the context  
7 of the formal instructional program; and

8 “(ii) may include information tech-  
9 nology expenses related to student service  
10 activities if the institution separately budg-  
11 ets and expenses information technology  
12 resources, otherwise these expenses are in-  
13 cluded in institutional support.

14 “(D) ACADEMIC SUPPORT EXPENDI-  
15 TURES.—The term ‘academic support expendi-  
16 tures’ includes—

17 “(i) expenses of activities and services  
18 that support the institution’s primary mis-  
19 sions of instruction, research, and public  
20 service, including—

21 “(I) the retention, preservation,  
22 and display of educational materials;

23 “(II) organized activities that  
24 provide support services to the aca-  
25 demic functions of the institution;

1 “(III) media such as audiovisual  
2 services;

3 “(IV) academic administration;  
4 and

5 “(V) formally organized and sep-  
6 arately budgeted academic personnel  
7 development and course and cur-  
8 riculum development expenses; and

9 “(ii) information technology expenses  
10 related to academic support activities or, if  
11 an institution does not separately budget  
12 and expense information technology re-  
13 sources, the costs associated with the three  
14 primary programs shall be applied to this  
15 function and the remainder to institutional  
16 support.

17 “(E) FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENTS  
18 ENROLLED.—The term ‘full-time equivalent  
19 students enrolled’ means the number of full-  
20 time students enrolled, plus—

21 “(i) in the case of an institution of  
22 higher education that is a public, 4-year  
23 institution—

1 “(I) the number of part-time un-  
2 dergraduate students enrolled multi-  
3 plied by 0.403543; and

4 “(II) the number of part-time  
5 graduate students enrolled multiplied  
6 by 0.361702;

7 “(ii) in the case of an institution of  
8 higher education that is a private, non-  
9 profit or for profit, 4-year institution—

10 “(I) the number of part-time un-  
11 dergraduate students enrolled multi-  
12 plied by 0.392857; and

13 “(II) the number of part-time  
14 graduate students enrolled multiplied  
15 by 0.382059;

16 “(iii) in the case of an institution of  
17 higher education that is a public, 2-year  
18 institution, the number of part-time under-  
19 graduate students enrolled multiplied by  
20 0.335737; and

21 “(iv) in the case of an institution of  
22 higher education that is not described in  
23 clause (i), (ii), or (iii), the number of part-  
24 time undergraduate students enrolled mul-  
25 tiplied by 0.397058.

1           “(2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—

2           The term ‘institution of higher education’ means an  
3           institution of higher education (as defined in section  
4           101(a)) or a proprietary institution of higher edu-  
5           cation (as defined in section 102(b))—

6                   “(A) that predominately awards more  
7                   bachelor’s degrees than associate’s degrees and  
8                   certificates; and

9                   “(B) that enrolls not less than 30 first-  
10                  time, full-time, degree- or certificate-seeking un-  
11                  dergraduate students.

12           “(3) LOW-INCOME OR WORKING CLASS STU-  
13           DENT.—The term ‘low-income or working class stu-  
14           dent’ means a student who is eligible to receive a  
15           Federal Pell Grant.

16           “(4) MODERATE-INCOME STUDENT.—The term  
17           ‘moderate-income student’ means a student who is  
18           eligible to receive a Federal Direct Stafford Loan  
19           but not eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant.

20           “(5) REMEDIAL COURSE.—The term ‘remedial  
21           course’ means a course of study that is determined  
22           by the institution which offers such course to be nec-  
23           essary to help a student be prepared for the pursuit  
24           of a first undergraduate bachelor’s degree but does  
25           not count for credit toward the degree.

1           “(6) UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITY.—The  
2           term ‘underrepresented minority’ means American  
3           Indian, Alaskan Native, Black (not of Hispanic ori-  
4           gin), Hispanic (including persons of Mexican, Puerto  
5           Rican, Cuban, and Central or South American ori-  
6           gin), or Pacific Islander minority group.

7           “(b) IMPROVING COLLEGE ACCESS.—

8           “(1) IN GENERAL.—In order for an institution  
9           of higher education to participate in any student fi-  
10          nancial assistance program under this title, the insti-  
11          tution shall comply with the improving college access  
12          program under this subsection.

13          “(2) CALCULATION OF PERCENTAGES OF FED-  
14          ERAL PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS.—

15               “(A) IN GENERAL.—For academic year  
16               2017–2018 and for each succeeding academic  
17               year, the Secretary shall determine, for each in-  
18               stitution of higher education, the percentage of  
19               bachelor’s degree-seeking students who enrolled  
20               at the institution for the first-time in a full-  
21               time capacity for the academic year who re-  
22               ceived a Federal Pell Grant for such academic  
23               year.

24               “(B) RANKING.—



1 “(i) IN GENERAL.—For academic year  
2 2017–2018 and for each succeeding aca-  
3 demic year, the Secretary shall rank the  
4 institutions according to the percentages  
5 determined under subparagraph (A).

6 “(ii) THRESHOLD MARK.—For aca-  
7 demic year 2017–2018 and for each suc-  
8 ceeding academic year, the Secretary shall  
9 determine, based on the rankings under  
10 this subparagraph, the percentage, deter-  
11 mined under subparagraph (A), at which  
12 and above which marks the top 95 percent  
13 of those institutions ranked.

14 “(C) FLOOR REACHED.—

15 “(i) FLOOR MARK.—For academic  
16 year 2017–2018, the Secretary shall deter-  
17 mine, based on the rankings under sub-  
18 paragraph (B)(i) for such academic year,  
19 the percentage, determined under subpara-  
20 graph (A), at which and above which  
21 marks the top 90 percent of those institu-  
22 tions ranked.

23 “(ii) COMPARISON OF THRESHOLD  
24 MARK TO FLOOR MARK.—If the threshold  
25 mark determined under subparagraph

1 (B)(ii) for an academic year is at or above  
2 the floor mark determined under clause (i),  
3 no institution shall be subject to the provi-  
4 sions of paragraph (3) for such academic  
5 year.

6 “(3) CONSEQUENCES OF LOW RANKING.—

7 “(A) NOTIFICATION.—

8 “(i) IN GENERAL.—

9 “(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to  
10 paragraph (2)(C)(ii), for academic  
11 year 2017–2018 and for each suc-  
12 ceeding academic year, the Secretary  
13 shall notify each institution of higher  
14 education that is in the bottom 5 per-  
15 cent of those institutions ranked  
16 under paragraph (2)(B)—

17 “(aa) that the institution is  
18 in such bottom 5 percent of those  
19 institutions ranked;

20 “(bb) of the threshold mark  
21 described in paragraph (2)(B)(ii)  
22 that such institution must meet  
23 or rise above; and

24 “(cc) that the institution has  
25 90 days to appeal to the Sec-

1                   retary to be removed from the  
2                   bottom 5 percent of those institu-  
3                   tions ranked.

4                   “(II) APPEAL.—An institution of  
5                   higher education that is in the bottom  
6                   5 percent of those institutions ranked  
7                   under paragraph (2)(B) for an aca-  
8                   demic year may appeal to the Sec-  
9                   retary, within 90 days of the notifica-  
10                  tion under subclause (I), to be re-  
11                  moved from such bottom 5 percent  
12                  ranking if—

13                   “(aa) the Secretary’s cal-  
14                   culation of its ranking is not ac-  
15                   curate, and that recalculation of  
16                   such ranking would raise the  
17                   ranking of the institution above  
18                   the bottom 5 percent of those in-  
19                   stitutions ranked; or

20                   “(bb) the institution’s per-  
21                   centage of all bachelor’s degree-  
22                   seeking students enrolled at the  
23                   institution who received a Fed-  
24                   eral Pell Grant for the academic

1 year is sufficiently high, as deter-  
2 mined by the Secretary.

3 “(III) AUTOMATIC REMOVAL.—

4 An institution of higher education  
5 that is in the bottom 5 percent of  
6 those institutions ranked under para-  
7 graph (2)(B) for an academic year  
8 but whose average percentage for the  
9 academic year and the 2 preceding  
10 academic years of bachelor’s degree-  
11 seeking students who enrolled at the  
12 institution for the first-time in a full-  
13 time capacity for the academic year  
14 and the 2 preceding academic years  
15 who received a Federal Pell Grant for  
16 the academic year and the 2 preceding  
17 academic years is at or above the  
18 threshold mark described in para-  
19 graph (2)(B)(ii) for the academic  
20 year, shall be automatically removed  
21 from such bottom 5 percent ranking.

22 “(ii) CONSUMER WARNING REPORT BY  
23 THE SECRETARY.—

24 “(I) IN GENERAL.—For academic  
25 year 2017–2018 and for each suc-

ceeding academic year, the Secretary shall issue a report, following resolution of all appeals brought pursuant to the 90 day appeal period, listing each institution of higher education that is in the bottom 5 percent of those institutions ranked under paragraph (2)(B), and not removed from such ranking in accordance with subclause (II) or (III) of clause (i), along with the percentage of bachelor's degree-seeking students who enrolled at each such institution for the first-time in a full-time capacity for the academic year who received a Federal Pell Grant for such academic year.

“(II) INCORPORATION INTO EXISTING DATA SOURCES.—In issuing the report under subclause (I), the Secretary shall incorporate the list of institutions in the bottom 5 percent of those institutions ranked and not removed from the ranking into data sources of the Department that exist on the date of enactment of the Ac-

1                   cess, Success, and Persistence in Re-  
2                   shaping Education Act of 2017, such  
3                   as the College Scorecard.

4                   “(B) PLAN.—An institution of higher edu-  
5                   cation that is included in the report under sub-  
6                   paragraph (A)(ii) shall develop a plan, not later  
7                   than 1 year after the date of the notification  
8                   under subparagraph (A)(i)(I) and in consulta-  
9                   tion with the Secretary, to meet or rise above  
10                  the threshold mark described in paragraph  
11                  (2)(B)(ii) applicable for the academic year for  
12                  which this institution was included in the report  
13                  under subparagraph (A)(ii) that triggered such  
14                  determination.

15                  “(C) CALCULATION OF AVERAGE.—For  
16                  each institution of higher education that is in-  
17                  cluded in the report under subparagraph (A)(ii)  
18                  for an academic year, the Secretary shall—

19                         “(i) grant the institution a hold harm-  
20                         less year for the academic year succeeding  
21                         the academic year for which the institution  
22                         receives notification under subparagraph  
23                         (A)(i)(I); and

24                         “(ii) determine the average percentage  
25                         over the 3 succeeding academic years fol-

lowing the hold harmless academic year described in clause (i) of bachelor's degree-seeking students who enrolled at the institution for the first-time in a full-time capacity for each of such 3 succeeding academic years who received a Federal Pell Grant for each of such 3 succeeding academic years.

“(D) FAILURE TO IMPROVE.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), if an institution of higher education has an average percentage determined under subparagraph (C)(ii) that is less than the threshold mark described in paragraph (2)(B)(ii) for the academic year for which the institution was included in the report under subparagraph (A)(ii) that triggered such determination, the Secretary shall impose on such institution a penalty described in subparagraph (E).

“(ii) DELAY OF PENALTY.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may delay imposing a penalty described in subparagraph (E) with

1           respect to an institution that has an  
2           average percentage determined under  
3           subparagraph (C)(ii) that is less than  
4           the threshold mark described in para-  
5           graph (2)(B)(ii) for the academic year  
6           for which the institution was included  
7           in the report under subparagraph  
8           (A)(ii) that triggered such determina-  
9           tion, but whose percentage determined  
10          for the most recent academic year is  
11          at or above such threshold mark.

12                   “(II) PERIOD OF DELAY.—The  
13           Secretary may delay imposing a pen-  
14           alty under subclause (I) for a period  
15           of not more than 2 years.

16                   “(III) NEW 3-YEAR AVERAGE.—  
17           With respect to an institution for  
18           which the Secretary delays imposing a  
19           penalty under this clause for a period  
20           of not more than 2 years, the Sec-  
21           retary, at the end of such delay pe-  
22           riod, shall determine the average per-  
23           centage over the 3 preceding years of  
24           bachelor’s degree-seeking students  
25           who enrolled at the institution for the



1 first-time in a full-time capacity for  
2 each of such 3 preceding academic  
3 years and who received a Federal Pell  
4 Grant for each of such 3 preceding  
5 academic years. If the institution has  
6 an average percentage that is less  
7 than the threshold mark described in  
8 paragraph (2)(B)(ii) for the academic  
9 year for which the institution was in-  
10 cluded in the report under subpara-  
11 graph (A)(ii) that triggered such de-  
12 termination, the Secretary shall im-  
13 pose on such institution a penalty de-  
14 scribed in subparagraph (E).

15 “(E) PENALTIES.—

16 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary  
17 shall impose a penalty under this para-  
18 graph in an amount determined under this  
19 subparagraph.

20 “(ii) AMOUNT OF PENALTY.—

21 “(I) IN GENERAL.—The penalty  
22 to be imposed under this subpara-  
23 graph with respect to an institution  
24 shall be a fee-per-student penalty, in  
25 which the number of additional stu-

1           dents determined with respect to such  
2           institution under subclause (II) for an  
3           academic year is multiplied by the in-  
4           stitution's average student-related ex-  
5           penditure for the academic year.

6                       “(II) NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL  
7                       STUDENTS TO BE DETERMINED.—

8           With respect to an institution of high-  
9           er education that is subject to the  
10          penalty under this subparagraph, the  
11          Secretary shall determine the total  
12          number of additional students the in-  
13          stitution would need to enroll over 3  
14          years as Federal Pell Grant recipients  
15          to meet the threshold mark described  
16          in paragraph (2)(B)(ii). Such number  
17          shall be calculated by determining the  
18          percentage equal to subtracting the  
19          average percentage determined under  
20          subparagraph (C)(ii) from the thresh-  
21          old mark described in paragraph  
22          (2)(B)(ii) for the academic year for  
23          which the institution was included in  
24          the report under subparagraph (A)(ii)  
25          that triggered such determination,

1 and multiplying such determined per-  
2 centage by the number of bachelor's  
3 degree-seeking students who enrolled  
4 at the institution for the first-time in  
5 a full-time capacity for an academic  
6 year over the 3 preceding academic  
7 years.

8 “(iii) COLLECTION OF PENALTY  
9 FEES.—The Secretary shall—

10 “(I) collect penalty fees imposed  
11 under this paragraph not later than 1  
12 year after such penalty is imposed;  
13 and

14 “(II) use the fees collected under  
15 subclause (I) to fund the completion  
16 improvement program under sub-  
17 section (d) and the completion bonus  
18 program under subsection (e).

19 “(iv) PROHIBITION ON USE OF INSTI-  
20 TUTIONAL NEED-BASED GRANT AID TO PAY  
21 FEES.—An institution of higher education  
22 that is subject to a penalty under this  
23 paragraph may not, in order to pay such  
24 penalty fee—

1                   “(I) reduce the amount of insti-  
2                   tutional need-based grant aid awarded  
3                   to students to attend the institution;  
4                   or

5                   “(II) increase tuition or fees.

6                   “(F) APPEALS.—

7                   “(i) IN GENERAL.—An institution of  
8                   higher education that is subject to a pen-  
9                   alty under this paragraph may appeal the  
10                  decision to impose such penalty or the  
11                  amount of the penalty to the Secretary.

12                  “(ii) CONTENT OF APPEAL.—The ap-  
13                  peals process shall permit the institution to  
14                  demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Sec-  
15                  retary—

16                         “(I) that there was a miscalcula-  
17                         tion of the penalty amount; or

18                         “(II) that there is some unfore-  
19                         seen and extreme circumstance that  
20                         should warrant a waiver from such  
21                         penalty or a reduction in the amount  
22                         of such penalty.

23                  “(c) IMPROVING COMPLETION.—

24                         “(1) IN GENERAL.—

## 21

1           “(A) IN GENERAL.—In order for an insti-  
2           tution of higher education to participate in any  
3           student financial assistance program under this  
4           title, the institution shall comply with the im-  
5           proving college completion program under this  
6           subsection.

7           “(B) ELECTION BY PUBLIC OR OTHER  
8           NONPROFIT INSTITUTIONS.—An institution of  
9           higher education that is a public or other non-  
10          profit institution of higher education may elect  
11          for the Secretary not to impose on such institu-  
12          tion a penalty described in paragraph (3)(E).  
13          An institution that makes such election shall  
14          not be eligible to receive a grant under the com-  
15          pletion improvement program under subsection  
16          (d) or the completion bonus program under  
17          subsection (e).

18          “(C) DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF  
19          HIGHER EDUCATION.—In this subsection, the  
20          term ‘institution of higher education’ means an  
21          institution of higher education (as defined in  
22          section 101(a)) or a proprietary institution of  
23          higher education (as defined in section  
24          102(b))—

1 “(i) that predominately awards more  
2 bachelor’s degrees than associate’s degrees  
3 and certificates; and

4 “(ii) that enrolls not less than 30  
5 first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree- or  
6 equivalent-degree-seeking undergraduate  
7 students.

8 “(2) CALCULATION OF PERCENTAGES OF COM-  
9 PLETION.—

10 “(A) IN GENERAL.—For academic year  
11 2017–2018 and for each succeeding academic  
12 year, the Secretary shall determine, for each in-  
13 stitution of higher education that participates  
14 in any program under this title, the percentage  
15 of first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking  
16 students who enrolled at the institution who  
17 graduate within 6 years.

18 “(B) RANKING.—

19 “(i) IN GENERAL.—For academic year  
20 2017–2018 and for each succeeding aca-  
21 demic year, the Secretary shall rank the  
22 institutions according to the percentages  
23 determined under subparagraph (A).

24 “(ii) THRESHOLD MARK.—For aca-  
25 demic year 2017–2018 and for each suc-

ceeding academic year, the Secretary shall determine, based on the rankings under clause (i), the percentage, determined under subparagraph (A), at which and above which marks the top 95 percent of the institutions ranked.

“(iii) RANKINGS FOR PEER GROUPS OF INSTITUTIONS.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—For academic year 2017–2018 and for each succeeding academic year, the Secretary shall rank the institutions according to the percentages determined under subparagraph (A) in each peer group of institutions described in subclause (II).

“(II) PEER GROUPS.—For academic year 2017–2018 and for each succeeding academic year, the Secretary shall establish peer groups of institutions. Each peer group shall include approximately 10 to 15, but not less than 3, institutions that are included in such group based on similar institutional characteristics. Such

## 24

1 characteristics shall include the fol-  
2 lowing:

3 “(aa) The percentage of  
4 first-time, full-time students en-  
5 rolled at the institution who re-  
6 ceive a Federal Pell Grant.

7 “(bb) The average SAT or  
8 ACT score of first-time, full-time  
9 students enrolled at the institu-  
10 tion.

11 “(cc) The average high  
12 school GPA of first-time, full-  
13 time students enrolled at the in-  
14 stitution.

15 “(dd) The institution’s aver-  
16 age student-related expenditure.

17 “(ee) Other characteristics  
18 that the Secretary determines are  
19 appropriate.

20 “(III) PEER GROUP ADJUST-  
21 MENT.—To provide for fair compari-  
22 sons among institutions serving dif-  
23 ferent student populations and insti-  
24 tutional resources, an institution that  
25 is in the bottom 5 percent of the insti-



1                   tutions ranked under clause (i) but in  
2                   the top two-thirds of institutions  
3                   ranked in the institution’s peer group,  
4                   as determined under subclause (II),  
5                   shall be removed from the bottom 5  
6                   percent of the institutions ranked  
7                   under clause (i). The Secretary shall  
8                   not impose on such an institution a  
9                   penalty described in paragraph  
10                  (3)(E).

11               “(C) FLOOR REACHED.—

12                   “(i) FLOOR MARK.—For academic  
13                   year 2017–2018, the Secretary shall deter-  
14                   mine, based on the rankings under sub-  
15                   paragraph (B)(i) for such academic year,  
16                   the percentage, determined under subpara-  
17                   graph (A), at which and above which  
18                   marks the top 90 percent of those institu-  
19                   tions ranked.

20                   “(ii) COMPARISON OF THRESHOLD  
21                   MARK TO FLOOR MARK.—If the threshold  
22                   mark determined under subparagraph  
23                   (B)(ii) for an academic year is at or above  
24                   the floor mark determined under clause (i),  
25                   no institution shall be subject to the provi-

1                   sions of paragraph (3) for such academic  
2                   year.

3                   “(3) CONSEQUENCES OF LOW RANKING.—

4                   “(A) IN GENERAL.—

5                   “(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to para-  
6                   graph (2)(C)(ii), for academic year 2017–  
7                   2018 and for each succeeding academic  
8                   year, the Secretary shall notify each insti-  
9                   tution of higher education that is in the  
10                  bottom 5 percent of those institutions  
11                  ranked under paragraph (2)(B)(i) (and not  
12                  removed                  under                  paragraph  
13                  (2)(B)(iii)(III))—

14                  “(I) that the institution is in  
15                  such bottom 5 percent of those insti-  
16                  tutions ranked for the academic year;

17                  “(II) of the applicable threshold  
18                  mark       described       in       paragraph  
19                  (2)(B)(ii) that such institution must  
20                  meet or rise above; and

21                  “(III) that the institution has 90  
22                  days to appeal to the Secretary to be  
23                  removed from the bottom 5 percent of  
24                  those institutions ranked.

1           “(ii) APPEAL.—An institution of high-  
2           er education that is in the bottom 5 per-  
3           cent of those institutions ranked under  
4           paragraph (2)(B)(i) (and not removed  
5           under paragraph (2)(B)(iii)(III)) for an  
6           academic year may appeal to the Sec-  
7           retary, within 90 days of the notification  
8           under clause (i), to be removed from such  
9           bottom 5 percent ranking if the Secretary’s  
10          calculation of its ranking is not accurate,  
11          and that recalculation of such ranking  
12          would raise the ranking of the institution  
13          above the bottom 5 percent of those insti-  
14          tutions ranked.

15          “(iii) AUTOMATIC REMOVAL.—An in-  
16          stitution of higher education that is in the  
17          bottom 5 percent of those institutions  
18          ranked under paragraph (2)(B)(i) (and not  
19          removed under paragraph (2)(B)(iii)(III))  
20          for an academic year but whose average  
21          percentage for the academic year and the  
22          2 preceding academic years of first-time,  
23          full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students  
24          who enrolled at the institution who grad-  
25          uate within 6 years is at or above the

1 threshold mark described in paragraph  
2 (2)(B)(ii) for the academic year, shall be  
3 automatically removed from such bottom 5  
4 percent ranking.

5 “(iv) CONSUMER WARNING REPORT  
6 BY THE SECRETARY.—

7 “(I) IN GENERAL.—For academic  
8 year 2017–2018 and for each suc-  
9 ceeding academic year, the Secretary  
10 shall issue a report, following resolu-  
11 tion of all appeals brought pursuant  
12 to the 90 day appeal period, listing  
13 each institution of higher education  
14 that is in the bottom 5 percent of  
15 those institutions ranked under para-  
16 graph (2)(B)(i), and not removed  
17 from such ranking in accordance with  
18 clause (ii) or (iii) or paragraph  
19 (2)(B)(iii)(III), along with the per-  
20 centage of first-time, full-time bach-  
21 elor’s degree-seeking students who en-  
22 rolled at each such institution who  
23 graduate within 6 years.

24 “(II) INCORPORATION INTO EX-  
25 ISTING DATA SOURCES.—In issuing

1 the report under subclause (I), the  
2 Secretary shall incorporate the list of  
3 institutions in the bottom 5 percent of  
4 those institutions ranked and not re-  
5 moved into data sources of the De-  
6 partment that exist on the date of en-  
7 actment of the Access, Success, and  
8 Persistence in Reshaping Education  
9 Act of 2017, such as the College  
10 Scorecard. In incorporating the list of  
11 institutions into data sources, the Sec-  
12 retary shall indicate which of such in-  
13 stitutions participate in the comple-  
14 tion improvement program under sub-  
15 section (d).

16 “(B) PLAN.—For academic year 2017–  
17 2018 and for each fifth succeeding academic  
18 year, an institution of higher education that is  
19 included in the report under subparagraph  
20 (A)(iv) shall develop a plan, not later than 1  
21 year after the date of the notification under  
22 subparagraph (A)(i) and in consultation with  
23 the Secretary, to meet or rise above the thresh-  
24 old mark described in paragraph (2)(B)(ii), ap-  
25 plicable for the academic year for which this in-

1           stitution was included in the report under sub-  
2           paragraph (A)(iv) that triggered such deter-  
3           mination.

4 “(C) CALCULATION OF AVERAGE.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—For academic year 2017–2018 and for each fifth succeeding academic year, for each institution of higher education that is included in the report under subparagraph (A)(iii) for an academic year, the Secretary shall—

“(I) grant the institution 2 hold harmless years for the academic years succeeding the academic year for which the institution receives notification under subparagraph (A)(i); and

“(II) determine the average percentage over the 3 succeeding academic years (as determined under clause (ii)) following the hold harmless academic years described in clause (i) of first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students who enrolled at the institution who graduate within 6 years.

1 “(ii) UNDER-RESOURCED YEARS.—In  
2 determining the 3 succeeding academic  
3 years under clause (i)(II), the Secretary  
4 shall skip any academic year that succeeds  
5 an academic year for which less than  
6 \$25,000,000 is collected under subsection  
7 (b)(3)(E).

8 “(D) FAILURE TO IMPROVE.—

9 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as pro-  
10 vided in clause (ii) or paragraph (1)(B), if  
11 an institution of higher education has an  
12 average percentage determined under sub-  
13 paragraph (C)(i)(II) that is less than the  
14 applicable threshold mark described in  
15 paragraph (2)(B)(ii), the Secretary shall  
16 impose on such institution a penalty de-  
17 scribed in subparagraph (E).

18 “(ii) DELAY OF PENALTY.—

19 “(I) IN GENERAL.—The Sec-  
20 retary may delay imposing a penalty  
21 described in subparagraph (E) with  
22 respect to an institution that has an  
23 average percentage determined under  
24 subparagraph (C)(i)(II) that is less  
25 than the applicable threshold mark

1 described in paragraph (2)(B)(ii), but  
2 whose percentage determined for the  
3 most recent academic year is at or  
4 above such threshold mark.

5 “(II) PERIOD OF DELAY.—The  
6 Secretary may delay imposing a pen-  
7 alty under subclause (I) for a period  
8 of not more than 2 years.

9 “(III) NEW AVERAGE.—With re-  
10 spect to an institution for which the  
11 Secretary delays imposing a penalty  
12 under this clause for a period of not  
13 more than 2 years, the Secretary, at  
14 the end of such delay period, shall de-  
15 termine the average percentage over  
16 the 3 preceding years of first-time,  
17 full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking  
18 students who enrolled at the institu-  
19 tion who graduate within 6 years. If  
20 the institution has an average per-  
21 centage that is less than the threshold  
22 mark described in paragraph  
23 (2)(B)(ii), the Secretary shall impose  
24 on such institution a penalty described  
25 in subparagraph (E).



1 “(E) PENALTIES.—

2 “(i) FIRST PENALTY YEAR.—

3 “(I) IN GENERAL.—Beginning  
4 with the fifth academic year after  
5 which penalty fees are collected under  
6 subsection (b)(3)(E), an institution of  
7 higher education that is subject to a  
8 penalty under this paragraph—

9 “(aa) that is a proprietary  
10 institution of higher education  
11 (as defined in section 102(b)),  
12 shall pay to the Secretary a  
13 \$1,000,000 penalty; and

14 “(bb) that is not a propri-  
15 etary institution of higher edu-  
16 cation (as defined in section  
17 102(b)), shall pay to the Sec-  
18 retary for an academic year an  
19 amount equal to 25 percent of  
20 the total amount of funds made  
21 available under subsection (d) to  
22 the institution during the 4 aca-  
23 demic years preceding the aca-  
24 demic year for which the penalty  
25 is due under this paragraph.

“(II) USE OF PENALTIES.—The Secretary shall use the penalty fees under this clause to fund the completion improvement program under subsection (d) and the completion bonus program under subsection (e).

“(ii) SECOND PENALTY YEAR.—One year after the first academic year for which an institution of higher education that is not a proprietary institution of higher education (as defined in section 102(b)) pays a penalty under clause (i)(I)(bb), the Secretary shall determine the average percentage for such year after such first academic year and the 2 preceding academic years of first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students who enrolled at the institution who graduate within 6 years. If such average percentage is less than the threshold mark described in paragraph (2)(B)(ii) for such year after such first academic year, the institution of higher education shall pay to the Secretary for such year after such first academic year an amount equal to 40 per-

cent of the total amount of funds made available under subsection (d) to the institution during the 5 academic years preceding the academic year for which the penalty is due under this clause. The Secretary shall use such penalty fees to fund the completion improvement program under subsection (d) and the completion bonus program under subsection (e).

“(iii) THIRD PENALTY YEAR.—Two years after the first academic year for which an institution of higher education that is not a proprietary institution of higher education (as defined in section 102(b)) pays a penalty under clause (i)(I)(bb), the Secretary shall determine the average percentage for such second year after such first academic year and the 2 preceding academic years of first-time, full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking students who enrolled at the institution who graduate within 6 years. If such average percentage is less than the threshold mark described in paragraph (2)(B)(ii) for such second year after such first academic year,

1 the institution of higher education shall  
2 pay to the Secretary for such second year  
3 after such first academic year an amount  
4 equal to 50 percent of the total amount of  
5 funds made available under subsection (d)  
6 to the institution during the 6 academic  
7 years preceding the academic year for  
8 which the penalty is due under this clause.  
9 The Secretary shall use such penalty fees  
10 to fund the completion improvement pro-  
11 gram under subsection (d) and the comple-  
12 tion bonus program under subsection (e).

13 “(iv) PROHIBITIONS.—An institution  
14 of higher education that is subject to a  
15 penalty under this subparagraph—

16 “(I) shall ensure that students  
17 enrolled at the institution receive the  
18 full amount of funding under this title  
19 they would otherwise have received  
20 had the institution not been subject to  
21 such penalty; and

22 “(II) may not, in order to pay for  
23 the penalty fee—

24 “(aa) reduce the amount of  
25 institutional need-based grant aid

1 awarded to students to attend  
2 the institution; and

3 “(bb) raise tuition or fees.

4 “(v) WAIVER.—The Secretary may  
5 waive or reduce a penalty under this sub-  
6 paragraph if the Secretary determines such  
7 a waiver is necessary to avoid extreme  
8 hardship for the students enrolled at the  
9 institution of higher education on which  
10 the penalty would be imposed.

11 “(vi) PAYMENT PLAN.—The Secretary  
12 may allow an institution of higher edu-  
13 cation that owes a penalty under this sub-  
14 paragraph to enter into a payment plan to  
15 pay such penalty amount.

16 “(F) APPEALS.—

17 “(i) IN GENERAL.—An institution of  
18 higher education that is subject to a pen-  
19 alty under this paragraph may appeal the  
20 decision to impose such penalty to the Sec-  
21 retary.

22 “(ii) CONTENT OF APPEAL.—The ap-  
23 peals process shall permit the institution to  
24 demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Sec-  
25 retary that there is some unforeseen and

1 extreme circumstance that should warrant  
2 a waiver from such penalty, a reduction in  
3 the amount of such penalty, or removal of  
4 the institution from the bottom 5 percent  
5 of those institutions ranked under para-  
6 graph (2)(B).

7 “(d) COMPLETION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—From funds available  
9 under paragraph (5), the Secretary shall establish a  
10 completion improvement program to award grants to  
11 eligible institutions of higher education to support  
12 reforms to improve completion rates.

13 “(2) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS.—An institution  
14 of higher education is eligible to receive a grant  
15 under this subsection if the institution—

16 “(A) is a public or other nonprofit institu-  
17 tion of higher education that is in the bottom  
18 5 percent of those institutions ranked under  
19 subsection (c)(2)(B);

20 “(B) has not been removed from the bot-  
21 tom 5 percent of those institutions ranked pur-  
22 suant to paragraph (2)(B)(iii)(III) or (3)(A) of  
23 subsection (c); and

24 “(C) has not elected to be exempt under  
25 subsection (c)(1)(B).

1 “(3) DETERMINATION OF GRANT AMOUNT.—

2 “(A) IN GENERAL.—In awarding grants  
3 under this subsection, the Secretary shall deter-  
4 mine a grant amount for each eligible institu-  
5 tion according to the formula under subpara-  
6 graph (B).

7 “(B) GRANT AMOUNT FORMULA.—

8 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as pro-  
9 vided in clause (iii), the grant amount for  
10 an eligible institution described in para-  
11 graph (2) for a fiscal year shall be equal  
12 to the Pell weight of such institution for  
13 the fiscal year, determined under clause  
14 (ii), multiplied by the amount available  
15 under paragraph (5) for such fiscal year.

16 “(ii) PELL WEIGHT.—

17 “(I) IN GENERAL.—The Pell  
18 weight of an eligible institution for a  
19 fiscal year shall be equal to a percent-  
20 age that is determined by dividing the  
21 institution’s Pell enrollment deter-  
22 mined under subclause (II) for the fis-  
23 cal year by the total Pell enrollment  
24 determined under subclause (III) for  
25 the fiscal year.

1                   “(II) INSTITUTION’S PELL EN-  
2                   ROLLMENT.—An eligible institution’s  
3                   Pell enrollment for a fiscal year shall  
4                   be equal to the percentage of bach-  
5                   elor’s degree-seeking students enrolled  
6                   at the institution for the academic  
7                   year that ended immediately pre-  
8                   ceding such fiscal year who received a  
9                   Federal Pell Grant for such academic  
10                  year.

11                  “(III) TOTAL PELL ENROLL-  
12                  MENT.—The total Pell enrollment for  
13                  a fiscal year shall be equal to the sum  
14                  of the percentages of bachelor’s de-  
15                  gree-seeking students enrolled at each  
16                  eligible institution, described in para-  
17                  graph (2), for the academic year that  
18                  ended immediately preceding such fis-  
19                  cal year who received a Federal Pell  
20                  Grant for such academic year.

21                  “(iii) MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT.—  
22                  The maximum grant amount for an eligible  
23                  institution described in paragraph (2) for a  
24                  fiscal year shall be \$2,000,000. An eligible  
25                  institution may choose to receive a grant



1 amount that is less than \$2,000,000. Any  
2 amounts available under paragraph (5) for  
3 such fiscal year that are remaining after  
4 awarding grants in accordance with this  
5 subparagraph shall be used to carry out  
6 the completion bonus program under sub-  
7 section (e).

8 “(4) USE OF FUNDS.—An institution of higher  
9 education that receives a grant under this subsection  
10 shall use the grant funds for reforms and practices  
11 that are part of the improvement plan of the institu-  
12 tion, as described under subsection (c)(3)(B)(i),  
13 which may include the following:

14 “(A) Increasing funds available for Federal  
15 Work-Study Programs for undergraduate stu-  
16 dents.

17 “(B) Increasing need-based institutional  
18 aid to students who are eligible for Federal Pell  
19 Grants.

20 “(C) Enhancing academic advising and  
21 student support services.

22 “(D) Expanding accelerated learning op-  
23 portunities.

24 “(E) Improving remedial course offerings.

1                   “(F) Data- and technology-driven efforts  
2                   to increase college completion rates.

3                   “(G) Enhancing regular and proactive ca-  
4                   reer advising and loan counseling services, in-  
5                   cluding post-enrollment services.

6                   “(H) Efforts to close completion gaps—

7                   “(i) between non-low-income or work-  
8                   ing class students and low-income or work-  
9                   ing class students; and

10                  “(ii) between non-underrepresented  
11                  minority students and underrepresented  
12                  minority students.

13                  “(5) AVAILABLE FUNDS.—Funds shall be avail-  
14                  able to carry out this subsection from the penalty  
15                  fees collected under subsections (b)(3)(E) and  
16                  (c)(3)(E).

17                  “(e) COMPLETION BONUS PROGRAM.—

18                  “(1) IN GENERAL.—From funds available  
19                  under paragraph (5), the Secretary shall establish a  
20                  completion bonus program to award grants on a  
21                  competitive basis to eligible institutions of higher  
22                  education to support reforms to improve completion  
23                  rates.

1           “(2) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS.—An institution  
2           of higher education is eligible to receive a grant  
3           under this subsection if the institution—

4                   “(A) is not in the bottom 5 percent of  
5           those institutions ranked under subsection  
6           (c)(2)(B); and

7                   “(B) is not in the bottom 5 percent of  
8           those institutions ranked under subsection  
9           (b)(2)(B).

10          “(3) APPLICATION AND PRIORITY.—

11               “(A) APPLICATION.—An eligible institution  
12           that desires a grant under this subsection shall  
13           submit an application to the Secretary at such  
14           time, in such manner, and containing such in-  
15           formation as the Secretary may require.

16               “(B) CONSIDERATION AND PRIORITY.—In  
17           awarding grants under this subsection, the Sec-  
18           retary—

19                   “(i) may consider an eligible institu-  
20           tion’s affordability, student loan repayment  
21           rate, and other factors; and

22                   “(ii) shall give priority to an eligible  
23           institution that is a part B institution (as  
24           defined in section 322) or a minority-serv-

1                   ing institution (as described in section  
2                   371(a)).

3                   “(4) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible institution  
4                   that receives a grant under this subsection shall use  
5                   the grant funds for reforms and practices to improve  
6                   completion rates, which may include the following:

7                   “(A) Increasing funds available for Federal  
8                   Work-Study Programs for undergraduate stu-  
9                   dents.

10                  “(B) Increasing need-based institutional  
11                  aid to students who are eligible for Federal Pell  
12                  Grants.

13                  “(C) Enhancing academic advising and  
14                  student support services.

15                  “(D) Expanding accelerated learning op-  
16                  portunities.

17                  “(E) Improving remedial course offerings.

18                  “(F) Data- and technology-driven efforts  
19                  to increase college completion rates.

20                  “(G) Enhancing regular and proactive ca-  
21                  reer advising and loan counseling services, in-  
22                  cluding post-enrollment services.

23                  “(H) Efforts to close completion gaps—

1 “(i) between non-low-income or work-  
2 ing class students and low-income or work-  
3 ing class students; and

4 “(ii) between non-underrepresented  
5 minority students and underrepresented  
6 minority students.

7 “(5) AVAILABLE FUNDS.—Funds shall be avail-  
8 able to carry out this subsection from funds from  
9 the penalty fees collected under subsections  
10 (b)(3)(E) and (c)(3)(E) that are remaining after  
11 grants are awarded for the completion improvement  
12 program under subsection (d).

13 “(f) NON-FINANCIAL REWARD BONUS PROGRAM.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall award  
15 non-financial rewards to institutions of higher edu-  
16 cation that have a proven record of making college  
17 more affordable and increasing college access and  
18 success for low-income or working class students and  
19 moderate-income students.

20 “(2) INSTITUTIONAL ELIGIBILITY.—An institu-  
21 tion of higher education is eligible for a non-finan-  
22 cial reward under this subsection for an academic  
23 year if—

24 “(A) the percentage of first-time, full-time  
25 bachelor’s degree-seeking students who enrolled

1 at the institution for the academic year who re-  
2 ceived a Federal Pell Grant for such academic  
3 year falls within the top 50 percent of ranked  
4 institutions, as determined by the Secretary for  
5 the academic year;

6 “(B) the percentage of first-time, full-time  
7 bachelor’s degree-seeking students who enrolled  
8 at the institution who graduate within 6 years  
9 falls within the top 25 percent of ranked insti-  
10 tutions, as determined by the Secretary for the  
11 academic year; and

12 “(C) the institution is not under Federal  
13 investigation for a sanction for an academic or  
14 financial irregularity.

15 “(3) APPLICATIONS.—An institution of higher  
16 education that desires to receive a non-financial re-  
17 ward under this subsection shall submit an applica-  
18 tion to the Secretary at such time, in such manner,  
19 and containing such information as the Secretary  
20 may require.

21 “(4) PRIORITY.—Priority in awarding non-fi-  
22 nancial rewards under this subsection shall go to in-  
23 stitutions of higher education that have small or di-  
24 minishing gaps in the completion rates—

1           “(A) between non-low-income or working  
2           class students and low-income or working class  
3           students; and

4           “(B) between non-underrepresented minor-  
5           ity students and underrepresented minority stu-  
6           dents.

7           “(5) NON-FINANCIAL REWARDS.—Non-financial  
8           rewards under this subsection may include the fol-  
9           lowing:

10           “(A) Reporting less frequently and avoid-  
11           ing duplicative reporting requirements.

12           “(B) Extra points in Department grant  
13           competitions for which institutions of higher  
14           education are eligible entities.

15           “(C) Waiving the multiple disbursement  
16           rule or disbursement delays.

17           “(D) Preferable status for experimental  
18           sites.

19           “(g) BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall estab-  
20           lish a publicly available electronic database identifying  
21           best practices—

22           “(1) of institutions of higher education that  
23           were in the bottom 5 percent of those institutions  
24           ranked under the improving college access program  
25           under subsection (b) or the improving college com-

1       pletion program under subsection (c) for academic  
2       year 2017–2018 or for any succeeding academic  
3       year and that have improved their ranking;

4               “(2) of eligible institutions of higher education  
5       awarded grants under the completion bonus program  
6       under subsection (e) to support reforms to improve  
7       completion rates; and

8               “(3) that the Secretary has determined in car-  
9       rying out this section.

10       “(h) ACCOUNTABILITY RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—  
11       Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect ac-  
12       countability provisions under other sources of law.

13       “(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
14       are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section  
15       such sums as may be necessary.”.

16       (b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years  
17       after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of  
18       Education shall submit a report to Congress that provides  
19       recommendations on ways to expand section 493E of the  
20       Higher Education Act of 1965, as added by subsection  
21       (a), to institutions with predominantly associate’s-degree  
22       seeking students, as well as other institutions of higher  
23       education not covered by such section.