

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To amend title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to establish the UNPLUGGED Schools Grant Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. KELLY (for himself and Mr. COTTON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to establish the UNPLUGGED Schools Grant Program, 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 “Utilize No Phones in
5 Learning to Unleash Growth in Grades and Educate Dis-
6 traction-free Schools Grant Act of 2026” or the
7 “UNPLUGGED Schools Grant Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. UNPLUGGED SCHOOLS GRANTS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title IV of the Elementary and
3 Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7101 et
4 seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

5 **“PART G—UNPLUGGED SCHOOLS GRANTS**

6 **“SEC. 4701. GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

7 “The Secretary shall establish a grant program to be
8 known as the ‘Utilize No Phones in Learning to Unleash
9 Growth in Grades and Educate Distraction-free Schools
10 Grant Program’ or the ‘UNPLUGGED Schools Grant
11 Program’ to award grants to State educational agencies
12 to support public elementary schools and public secondary
13 schools with implementing a personal electronic device pol-
14 icy described in section 4702(a).

15 **“SEC. 4702. ELIGIBILITY.**

16 “(a) PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY RE-
17 QUIRED.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this part,
18 a State educational agency shall be required to have in
19 effect a policy, designed in coordination with each local
20 educational agency served by the State educational agency
21 and in consultation with educators, parents, and students,
22 that applies to each public elementary school and public
23 secondary school served by each such local educational
24 agency that prohibits student possession or use of personal
25 electronic devices in schools during school hours. Such pol-
26 icy—

1 “(1) shall permit exceptions—

2 “(A) for students with health conditions
3 that require the use of a mobile phone or other
4 personal electronic device as part of a treatment
5 or monitoring plan, as certified by a licensed
6 healthcare provider; and

7 “(B) for students with disabilities or spe-
8 cial needs for whom access to a mobile phone
9 or other personal electronic device is—

10 “(i) documented as necessary in an
11 individualized education program; or

12 “(ii) included as part of services or
13 accommodations provided to the student
14 pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilita-
15 tion Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794) (com-
16 monly referred to as a ‘Section 504 plan’);
17 and

18 “(2) may permit exceptions—

19 “(A) on an individualized basis, for stu-
20 dents—

21 “(i) who are English learners;

22 “(ii) who have a demonstrated need
23 for a personal electronic device to facilitate
24 instruction; and

1 “(iii) who acquire documentation in
2 support of clauses (i) and (ii) in accord-
3 ance with procedures established by the
4 State educational agency; and

5 “(B) for additional students as determined
6 appropriate by State educational agencies.

7 “(b) PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY DE-
8 VELOPMENT.—The Secretary, in coordination with the
9 Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall make
10 available, upon request from a State educational agency,
11 subject matter experts to provide technical assistance in
12 the development of a personal electronic device policy de-
13 scribed in subsection (a).

14 “(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this part
15 shall be construed as preempting or otherwise preventing
16 a State, State educational agency, local educational agen-
17 cy, or school from enacting or enforcing policies or proce-
18 dures regarding student possession or use of personal elec-
19 tronic devices during school hours, on school grounds, or
20 during school activities that is more restrictive than a per-
21 sonal electronic device policy described in subsection (a).

22 **“SEC. 4703. APPLICATION.**

23 “To be eligible to receive a grant under this part, a
24 State educational agency shall submit to the Secretary an
25 application at such time, in such manner, and containing

1 such information as the Secretary may require, includ-
2 ing—

3 “(1) a certification that the State educational
4 agency has in effect a personal electronic device pol-
5 icy that satisfies the requirements described in sec-
6 tion 4702(a); and

7 “(2) a certification that the State educational
8 agency permits public elementary schools and public
9 secondary schools and local educational agencies
10 served by the State educational agency to develop
11 policies and procedures that enable—

12 “(A) parents to notify students through
13 school personnel about changes in pick-up times
14 and other logistical issues; and

15 “(B) school personnel to communicate with
16 parents and with local emergency responders
17 regarding time-sensitive matters.

18 **“SEC. 4704. USE OF FUNDS.**

19 “A State educational agency that receives a grant
20 under this part shall use such grant to—

21 “(1) develop and implement procedures to en-
22 force a personal electronic device policy described in
23 section 4702(a); and

24 “(2) acquire secure storage methods for use at
25 public elementary schools and public secondary

1 schools for safely storing personal electronic devices
2 in accordance with a personal electronic device policy
3 described in section 4702(a).

4 **“SEC. 4705. ALLOCATIONS TO STATE EDUCATIONAL AGEN-**
5 **CIES.**

6 “(a) IN GENERAL.—From the total amount appro-
7 priated under section 4707 for a fiscal year, the Secretary
8 shall allot to each State educational agency that has an
9 approved application for a grant under this part an
10 amount that bears the same relationship to the total
11 amount as the amount that the State of such State edu-
12 cational agency received under subpart 2 of part A of title
13 I for the preceding fiscal year bears to the amount all
14 States received under that subpart for the preceding fiscal
15 year.

16 “(b) SMALL STATE MINIMUM.—No State educational
17 agency receiving an allotment under this paragraph shall
18 receive less than one-half of 1 percent of the total amount
19 allotted under this paragraph.

20 “(c) REALLOTMENT OF UNUSED FUNDS.—If a State
21 educational agency does not receive an allotment under
22 this part for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall realLOT the
23 amount of the allotment that such State educational agen-
24 cy would have received to the remaining State educational
25 agencies in accordance with this part.

1 **“SEC. 4706. DEFINITIONS.**

2 “In this part:

3 “(1) INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM.—

4 The term ‘individualized education program’ has the
5 meaning given such term in section 602(14) of the
6 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20
7 U.S.C. 1401(14)).

8 “(2) MOBILE PHONE.—The term ‘mobile phone’
9 means any handheld communication device with cel-
10 lular, Wi-Fi, or Bluetooth capability, including
11 smartphones and similar devices.

12 “(3) PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE.—

13 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
14 subparagraph (B), the term ‘personal electronic
15 device’, when used with respect to a device pos-
16 sessed or used by a student, includes a mobile
17 phone, smartwatch, laptop, tablet, and other
18 handheld or wearable device with communica-
19 tion, internet, or multimedia capabilities.

20 “(B) EXCEPTION.—The term ‘personal
21 electronic device’ does not include a laptop or
22 tablet that—

23 “(i) a student is authorized by the
24 school of the student to use during school
25 hours;

1 “(ii) is used by such student only for
2 instructional purposes; and

3 “(iii) is restricted from accessing so-
4 cial media platforms, personal email, per-
5 sonal messaging applications, texting serv-
6 ices, and other non-academic applications
7 during school hours.

8 “(4) SCHOOL HOURS.—The term ‘school hours’
9 means the period from the start of the instructional
10 day (as defined by the State educational agency)
11 until the end of the instructional day.

12 “(5) SECURE STORAGE METHODS.—The term
13 ‘secure storage methods’ means storage solutions
14 that are designed to keep personal electronic devices
15 safely and securely stored and to prevent students
16 from accessing such devices during school hours
17 without permission, including—

18 “(A) lockable lockers;

19 “(B) secure lock boxes;

20 “(C) magnetic pouches or other signal-
21 blocking storage devices; and

22 “(D) other storage solutions as determined
23 appropriate by the State educational agency.

1 **“SEC. 4707. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 “To carry out this part, there are authorized to be
3 appropriated such sums as may be necessary.”.

4 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in
5 section 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
6 of 1965 is amended by inserting after the item relating
7 to section 4644 the following new items:

“PART G—UNPLUGGED SCHOOLS GRANTS

“Sec. 4701. Grant program authorized.

“Sec. 4702. Eligibility.

“Sec. 4703. Application.

“Sec. 4704. Use of funds.

“Sec. 4705. Allocations to State educational agencies.

“Sec. 4706. Definitions.

“Sec. 4707. Authorization of appropriations.”.