

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 7032

To ensure that paraprofessionals and education support staff are paid a living wage.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 13, 2026

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois (for himself, Mrs. HAYES, Mrs. GRIJALVA, Mr. CASAR, Ms. CRAIG, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. LANDSMAN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. BUDZINSKI, Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. GARCIA of California, Mr. CARSON, Ms. CHU, Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. TITUS, Mr. EVANS of Pennsylvania, Ms. NORTON, Ms. STANSBURY, Mr. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. RAMIREZ, Mr. THANEDAR, Ms. GARCIA of Texas, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. DAVIS of Illinois) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Workforce

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## A BILL

To ensure that paraprofessionals and education support staff are paid a living wage.

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 “Pay Paraprofessionals  
5 and Support Staff Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PAY PARAPROFESSIONALS AND EDUCATION SUP-**  
2 **PORT STAFF ACT.**

3 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) ESEA.—The terms “English learner”,  
5 “local educational agency”, “paraprofessional”,  
6 “professional development”, “Secretary”, and  
7 “State” have the meanings given the terms in sec-  
8 tion 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-  
9 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

10 (2) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT PERCENTAGE.—The  
11 term “annual adjustment percentage” means, with  
12 respect to a fiscal year, a percentage equal to the es-  
13 timated percentage change in the Consumer Price  
14 Index, as determined by the Secretary, for the most  
15 recent calendar year ending prior to the beginning of  
16 such fiscal year.

17 (3) MINIMUM SALARY FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL  
18 AND EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “minimum  
20 salary for paraprofessional and education sup-  
21 port staff” means an amount, determined by  
22 the State, that all full-time equivalent employ-  
23 ees employed by a local educational agency are  
24 required by the State to be compensated by  
25 such agency as their annual base salary, and  
26 which—

1 (i) is greater than the amount de-  
2 scribed in subparagraph (B); and

3 (ii) increases as the experience of such  
4 school staff increases.

5 (B) INDEXING SALARY GROWTH TO INFLA-  
6 TION.—

7 (i) FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH  
8 2030.—For each of fiscal years 2026  
9 through 2030, the amount described in  
10 this subparagraph is \$45,000.

11 (ii) FISCAL YEARS 2031 AND AFTER.—  
12 For each fiscal year in the fiscal year pe-  
13 riod 2031 through 2035 and in each subse-  
14 quent 5 fiscal year period, the amount de-  
15 scribed this subparagraph shall be equal to  
16 the amount applicable for each fiscal year  
17 in the previous 5 fiscal year period, in-  
18 creased by the greater of—

19 (I) the aggregate annual adjust-  
20 ment percentage over the previous 5  
21 fiscal years; or

22 (II) 2 percent of the amount ap-  
23 plicable under this subsection for the  
24 previous 5 fiscal year period.

1 (4) MINIMUM WAGE FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL  
2 AND EDUCATION SUPPORT STAFF.—

3 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “minimum  
4 wage for paraprofessional and education sup-  
5 port staff” means an amount, determined by  
6 the State, that all part-time equivalent staff  
7 employed by a local educational agency are re-  
8 quired by the State to be paid by such agency,  
9 and which—

10 (i) is greater than the amount de-  
11 scribed in subparagraph (B); and

12 (ii) increases as the experience of such  
13 school staff increases.

14 (B) INDEXING SALARY GROWTH TO INFLA-  
15 TION.—

16 (i) FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH  
17 2030.—For each of fiscal years 2026  
18 through 2030, the amount described in  
19 this subparagraph is \$30.00 an hour.

20 (ii) FISCAL YEARS 2031 AND AFTER.—  
21 For each fiscal year in the fiscal year pe-  
22 riod 2031 through 2035 and in each subse-  
23 quent 5 fiscal year period, the amount de-  
24 scribed this subparagraph shall be equal to  
25 the amount applicable for each fiscal year

1 in the previous 5 fiscal year period, in-  
2 creased by the greater of—

3 (I) the aggregate annual adjust-  
4 ment percentage over the previous 5  
5 fiscal years; or

6 (II) 2 percent of the amount ap-  
7 plicable under this subsection for the  
8 previous 5 fiscal year period.

9 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to en-  
10 sure that paraprofessionals and education support staff,  
11 who are the backbone of our Nation’s public education sys-  
12 tem, are—

13 (1) paid a living wage, which means—

14 (A) a minimum salary for paraprofessional  
15 and education support staff; or

16 (B) a minimum wage for paraprofessional  
17 and education support staff;

18 (2) compensated in a manner that recognizes  
19 some regions may have higher costs of living and  
20 therefore necessitate higher minimum salaries or  
21 wages;

22 (3) recognized as public servants who provide  
23 essential services that keep our Nation’s public  
24 schools running and our students thriving; and

1           (4) provided safe working conditions and treat-  
2           ed with the respect and dignity they deserve.

3           (c) AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATIONS.—In ad-  
4           dition to amounts otherwise available, there are authorized  
5           to be appropriated and there are appropriated out of any  
6           money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to the  
7           Department of Education, to carry this section—

8           (1) for fiscal year 2026, \$25,000,000,000; and

9           (2) for each succeeding fiscal year, the amount  
10          appropriated under this section for the preceding fis-  
11          cal year, increased by the annual adjustment per-  
12          centage.

13          (d) AUTHORIZATION OF GRANTS.—

14          (1) RESERVATIONS.—From the total amount  
15          appropriated under subsection (c) for a fiscal year,  
16          the Secretary shall reserve not more than—

17                 (A) 1 percent to provide grants, contracts,  
18                 or cooperative agreements to regional edu-  
19                 cational laboratories (established under section  
20                 174 of the Education Sciences Reform Act of  
21                 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9564)) or qualified nonprofit  
22                 organizations to assist States that receive  
23                 grants under this section carry out applied re-  
24                 search or evaluations in providing paraprofes-  
25                 sionals and education support staff with oppor-

1           tunities for personnel preparation, professional  
2           development, credentials, or certifications, such  
3           as to assist in the provision of special education  
4           and related services or to serve English learn-  
5           ers; and

6                   (B) 1 percent for technical assistance and  
7           program administration of this section.

8           (2) GRANTS.—The Secretary shall award  
9           grants to States from allotments under paragraph  
10          (3) to ensure that all local educational agencies have  
11          the resources necessary to pay paraprofessionals and  
12          education support staff a living wage, which  
13          means—

14                   (A) the minimum salary for paraprofes-  
15          sional and education support staff; or

16                   (B) a minimum wage for paraprofessional  
17          and education support staff.

18          (3) ALLOTMENTS.—From the amounts appro-  
19          priated under subsection (b) that are remaining  
20          after making the reservations described in paragraph  
21          (1) for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall allot to each  
22          State that has submitted an approved application  
23          under subsection (d), an amount that bears the  
24          same relationship to the remainder as the amount  
25          the State received under part A of title I of the Ele-

1       mentary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20  
2       U.S.C. 6311 et seq.) for the preceding fiscal year  
3       bears to the amount all States received under that  
4       subpart for the preceding fiscal year.

5       (e) STATE APPLICATION.—In order to receive a grant  
6       under this section, a State shall submit an application to  
7       the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and including  
8       such information as the Secretary may reasonably require,  
9       including the following:

10           (1) A timeline, consistent with the goals re-  
11           quired under paragraph (2), to ensure that, not later  
12           than 4 years after the receipt of a grant under this  
13           section—

14                   (A) the annual base salary of a full-time  
15                   equivalent employee employed by a local edu-  
16                   cational agency in the State is not less than the  
17                   minimum salary for paraprofessional and edu-  
18                   cation support staff, as determined by the  
19                   State; and

20                   (B) all part-time equivalent staff employed  
21                   by a local educational agency in the State are  
22                   paid not less than the minimum wage for para-  
23                   professional and education support staff, as de-  
24                   termined by the State.



1           (2) For each fiscal year in the timeline specified  
2           in paragraph (1), statewide annual goals for increas-  
3           ing average salary or wage baselines of paraprofes-  
4           sionals and education support staff in a manner  
5           that—

6                   (A) annually proposes a percentage in-  
7                   crease in the average wage or salary of para-  
8                   professionals and education support staff;

9                   (B) provides for the first increase to occur  
10                  not later than the second fiscal year a State re-  
11                  ceives a grant under this section; and

12                  (C) makes significant progress toward en-  
13                  suring that, by the end of the timeline described  
14                  in subparagraph (A)—

15                          (i) the annual base salary of a full-  
16                          time equivalent employee employed by a  
17                          local educational agency in the State is not  
18                          less than the minimum salary for para-  
19                          professional and education support staff,  
20                          as determined by the State; and

21                          (ii) all part-time equivalent staff em-  
22                          ployed by a local educational agency in the  
23                          State are paid not less than the minimum  
24                          wage for paraprofessional and education  
25                          support staff, as determined by the State.

1           (3) The State’s proposed formula to subgrant  
2 funds to local educational agencies as described in  
3 subsection (g) in a manner that ensures—

4           (A) local educational agencies that serve a  
5 high number or percentage of students from  
6 low-income backgrounds receive substantial  
7 subgrant allocations that enable such agencies  
8 to meet the requirements described in subpara-  
9 graphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) not later  
10 than 2 years after the receipt of a subgrant;  
11 and

12           (B) all remaining local educational agen-  
13 cies in the State meet the State’s requirements  
14 in the timeline described in paragraph (1).

15       (f) IMPROVING PARAPROFESSIONAL AND SCHOOL  
16 STAFF WAGES AND SALARIES.—

17           (1) STATE RESERVATION.—A State that re-  
18 ceives a grant under this section may reserve not  
19 more than 2 percent of the total grant amount re-  
20 ceived by the State for technical assistance, adminis-  
21 trative purposes, and statewide efforts to provide  
22 paraprofessionals and education support staff with  
23 opportunities for personnel preparation, professional  
24 development, credentials, or certifications, such as to

1 assist in the provision of special education and re-  
2 lated services or to serve English learners.

3 (2) IMPROVING WAGES AND SALARIES.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-  
5 graph (B), a State that receives a grant under  
6 this section shall ensure that, within a timeline  
7 determined by the State under subsection (e)(1)  
8 and approved by the Secretary—

9 (i) the annual base salary of a full-  
10 time equivalent employee employed by a  
11 local educational agency in the State is not  
12 less than the minimum salary for para-  
13 professional and education support staff,  
14 as determined by the State; and

15 (ii) all part-time equivalent staff em-  
16 ployed by a local educational agency in the  
17 State are paid not less than the minimum  
18 wage for paraprofessional and education  
19 support staff, as determined by the State.

20 (B) TIMING.—The Secretary shall ensure  
21 that, by not later than 4 years after the date  
22 of implementation of the final regulations  
23 issued under this Act, each State that receives  
24 a grant under this section meets the salary and

1 wage requirements specified in subparagraph  
2 (A).

3 (g) SUBGRANTS TO LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGEN-  
4 CIES.—

5 (1) ALLOCATION.—Each State shall allocate  
6 not less than 98 percent of the grant funds awarded  
7 to the State under this section as subgrants to local  
8 educational agencies (including charter schools that  
9 are local educational agencies) in the State under  
10 the formula determined by the State under sub-  
11 section (e)(3) and approved by the Secretary.

12 (2) USES OF SUBGRANT FUNDS.—A local edu-  
13 cational agency that receives a subgrant under para-  
14 graph (1)—

15 (A) shall use the subgrant funds to comply  
16 with the State’s requirements in accordance  
17 with subsection (e) guaranteeing that no full-  
18 time equivalent employee of the agency is paid  
19 less than the minimum salary for paraprofes-  
20 sional and education support staff and no part-  
21 time equivalent employee of the agency is paid  
22 less than the minimum wage for paraprofes-  
23 sional and education support staff; and

24 (B) may use subgrant funds—

1 (i) to increase salaries or wages for  
2 teachers, paraprofessionals, specialized in-  
3 structional support personnel, classified  
4 school employees, principals, other school  
5 leaders, school librarians, school bus driv-  
6 ers, and other staff across their careers;  
7 and

8 (ii) to provide paraprofessionals and  
9 education support staff with opportunities  
10 for personnel preparation, professional de-  
11 velopment, credentials, or certifications,  
12 such as to assist in the provision of special  
13 education and related services or to serve  
14 English learners.

15 (3) CONTRACTED STAFF.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—A local educational  
17 agency that receives a subgrant under this sec-  
18 tion shall ensure that staff employed by such  
19 agency or in any contract such agency enters  
20 into, are paid an amount not less than the min-  
21 imum salary for paraprofessionals and edu-  
22 cation support staff or the minimum wage for  
23 paraprofessionals and education support staff in  
24 the State.

1 (B) MONITORING.—A State that receives a  
2 grant under this section shall monitor local edu-  
3 cational agencies for compliance with subpara-  
4 graph (A).

5 (h) RULES.—

6 (1) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION FOR COLLECTIVE  
7 BARGAINING.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-  
9 graph (B), nothing in this Act shall be con-  
10 strued to alter or otherwise affect the rights,  
11 remedies, and procedures afforded to school or  
12 local educational agency employees under Fed-  
13 eral, State, or local laws (including applicable  
14 regulations or court orders) or under the terms  
15 of collective bargaining agreements, memoranda  
16 of understanding, or other agreements between  
17 such employers and their employees.

18 (B) COMPLIANCE.—Subparagraph (A)  
19 shall not be construed to exempt a State, local  
20 educational agency, or school from complying  
21 with salary or wage requirements in this Act or  
22 from negotiating in compliance with State labor  
23 laws to comply with this Act.

24 (2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION FOR ADDITIONAL  
25 PAY OR OTHER SALARY AUGMENTING SYSTEMS.—

1 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prevent  
2 States or local educational agencies from  
3 supplementing the annual base salary of teachers,  
4 paraprofessionals, education support staff, or other  
5 staff employed by such agencies—

6 (A) for additional skills, knowledge, duties,  
7 and responsibilities;

8 (B) by salary systems that increase teach-  
9 ers' compensation through supplemental pay  
10 that is not part of an annual base salary; or

11 (C) through the provision of bonuses, sti-  
12 pends, or awards.

13 (3) NO WAIVER AUTHORITY.—Section 8401 of  
14 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of  
15 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7861) shall not apply to this Act.

16 (4) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—

17 (A) IN GENERAL.—A State shall use Fed-  
18 eral funds received under this Act only to sup-  
19 plement the funds that would, in the absence of  
20 such Federal funds, be made available from  
21 State and local sources for elementary and sec-  
22 ondary education, and not to supplant State  
23 and local funds.

24 (B) COMPLIANCE.—The Secretary shall  
25 use funds described in subsection (d)(1)(B) to

1           administer programs authorized under this sub-  
2           part and to issue technical assistance to States  
3           and to monitor and enforce the requirements  
4           under such programs.

○