

AMENDMENT TO
RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 116–57
OFFERED BY MS. BROWNLEY OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of title XVII, insert the following new subtitle:

1 **Subtitle F—Biliteracy Education**
2 **Seal and Teaching Act**

3 **SEC. 1771. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This subtitle may be cited as the “Biliteracy Edu-
5 cation Seal and Teaching Act” or the “BEST Act”.

6 **SEC. 1772. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The people of the United States celebrate
9 cultural and linguistic diversity and seek to prepare
10 students with skills to succeed in the 21st century.

11 (2) It is fitting to commend the dedication of
12 students who have achieved proficiency in multiple
13 languages and to encourage their peers to follow in
14 their footsteps.

15 (3) The congressionally requested Commission
16 on Language Learning, in its 2017 report “Amer-
17 ica’s Languages: Investing in Language Education
18 for the 21st Century”, notes the pressing national

1 need for more people of the United States who are
2 proficient in two or more languages for national se-
3 curity, economic growth, and the fulfillment of the
4 potential of all people of the United States.

5 (4) The Commission on Language Learning
6 also notes the extensive cognitive, educational, and
7 employment benefits deriving from biliteracy.

8 (5) Biliteracy in general correlates with higher
9 graduation rates, higher grade point averages, high-
10 er rates of matriculation into higher education, and
11 higher earnings for all students, regardless of back-
12 ground.

13 (6) The study of America's languages in ele-
14 mentary and secondary schools should be encouraged
15 because it contributes to a student's cognitive devel-
16 opment and to the national economy and security.

17 (7) Recognition of student achievement in lan-
18 guage proficiency will enable institutions of higher
19 education and employers to readily recognize and ac-
20 knowledge the valuable expertise of bilingual stu-
21 dents in academia and the workplace.

22 (8) States such as Utah, Arizona, Washington,
23 and New Mexico have developed innovative testing
24 methods for languages, including Native American

1 languages, where no formal proficiency test currently
2 exists.

3 (9) The use of proficiency in a government-rec-
4 ognized official Native American language as the
5 base language for a Seal of Biliteracy, with pro-
6 ficiency in any additional partner language dem-
7 onstrated through tested proficiency, has been suc-
8 cessfully demonstrated in Hawaii.

9 (10) Students in every State and every school
10 should be able to benefit from a Seal of Biliteracy
11 program.

12 **SEC. 1773. DEFINITIONS.**

13 In this subtitle:

14 (1) ESEA DEFINITIONS.—The terms “English
15 learner”, “secondary school”, and “State” have the
16 meanings given those terms in section 8101 of the
17 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
18 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

19 (2) NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES.—The term
20 “Native American languages” has the meaning given
21 the term in section 103 of the Native American Lan-
22 guages Act (25 U.S.C. 2902).

23 (3) SEAL OF BILITERACY PROGRAM.—The term
24 “Seal of Biliteracy program” means any program
25 described in section 1774(a) that is established or

1 improved, and carried out, with funds received under
2 this subtitle.

3 (4) SECOND LANGUAGE.—The term “second
4 language” means any language other than English
5 (or a Native American language, pursuant to section
6 1774(a)(2)), including Braille, American Sign Lan-
7 guage, or a Classical language.

8 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
9 the Secretary of Education.

10 **SEC. 1774. GRANTS FOR STATE SEAL OF BILITERACY PRO-**
11 **GRAMS.**

12 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts made avail-
14 able under subsection (f), the Secretary shall award
15 grants, on a competitive basis, to States to enable
16 the States to establish or improve, and carry out,
17 Seal of Biliteracy programs to recognize student
18 proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in both
19 English and a second language.

20 (2) INCLUSION OF NATIVE AMERICAN LAN-
21 GUAGES.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), each Seal
22 of Biliteracy program shall contain provisions allow-
23 ing the use of Native American languages, including
24 allowing speakers of any Native American language
25 recognized as official by any American government,

1 including any Tribal government, to use equivalent
2 proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in the
3 Native American language in lieu of proficiency in
4 speaking, reading, and writing in English.

5 (3) DURATION.—A grant awarded under this
6 section shall be for a period of 2 years, and may be
7 renewed at the discretion of the Secretary.

8 (4) RENEWAL.—At the end of a grant term, a
9 State that receives a grant under this section may
10 reapply for a grant under this section.

11 (5) LIMITATIONS.—A State shall not receive
12 more than 1 grant under this section at any time.

13 (6) RETURN OF UNSPENT GRANT FUNDS.—
14 Each State that receives a grant under this section
15 shall return any unspent grant funds not later than
16 6 months after the date on which the term for the
17 grant ends.

18 (b) GRANT APPLICATION.—A State that desires a
19 grant under this section shall submit an application to the
20 Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing
21 such information and assurances as the Secretary may re-
22 quire, including—

23 (1) a description of the criteria a student must
24 meet to demonstrate the proficiency in speaking,

1 reading, and writing in both languages necessary for
2 the State Seal of Biliteracy program;

3 (2) a detailed description of the State's plan—

4 (A) to ensure that English learners and
5 former English learners are included in the
6 State Seal of Biliteracy program;

7 (B) to ensure that—

8 (i) all languages, including Native
9 American languages, can be tested for the
10 State Seal of Biliteracy program; and

11 (ii) Native American language speak-
12 ers and learners are included in the State
13 Seal of Biliteracy program, including stu-
14 dents at tribally controlled schools and at
15 schools funded by the Bureau of Indian
16 Education; and

17 (C) to reach students, including eligible
18 students described in subsection (c)(2) and
19 English learners, their parents, and schools
20 with information regarding the State Seal of
21 Biliteracy program;

22 (3) an assurance that a student who meets the
23 requirements under paragraph (1) and subsection
24 (c) receives—

1 (A) a permanent seal or other marker on
2 the student's secondary school diploma or its
3 equivalent; and

4 (B) documentation of proficiency on the
5 student's official academic transcript; and

6 (4) an assurance that a student is not charged
7 a fee for providing information under subsection
8 (c)(1).

9 (c) STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN A SEAL OF
10 BILITERACY PROGRAM.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—To participate in a Seal of
12 Biliteracy program, a student shall provide informa-
13 tion to the State that serves the student at such
14 time, in such manner, and including such informa-
15 tion and assurances as the State may require, in-
16 cluding an assurance that the student has met the
17 criteria established by the State under subsection
18 (b)(1).

19 (2) STUDENT ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPA-
20 TION.—A student who gained proficiency in a second
21 language outside of school may apply under para-
22 graph (1) to participate in a Seal of Biliteracy pro-
23 gram.

24 (d) USE OF FUNDS.—Grant funds made available
25 under this section shall be used for—

1 (1) the administrative costs of establishing or
2 improving, and carrying out, a Seal of Biliteracy
3 program that meets the requirements of subsection
4 (b); and

5 (2) public outreach and education about the
6 Seal of Biliteracy program.

7 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after receiv-
8 ing a grant under this section, a State shall issue a report
9 to the Secretary describing the implementation of the Seal
10 of Biliteracy program for which the State received the
11 grant.

12 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
13 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
14 \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025.

