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2D SESSION

S. 3475

To increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2012

Ms. LANDRIEU introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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A BILL

To increase the participation of historically underrepresented demographic groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and industry.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Women and Minorities in STEM Booster Act of 2012''.

SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITIES IN STEM FIELDS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) One of the core missions of the National Science Foundation is "to achieve excellence in U.S. science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education".

(2) According to the National Academy of Sciences, STEM education at the undergraduate level is vital to developing a workforce that will allow the United States to remain the leader in the 21st century global economy.

(3) According to the National Academy of Sciences, in order to maintain scientific and engineering leadership amid increasing economic and educational globalization, the United States must aggressively pursue the innovative capacity of all people in the United States—women and men.

(4) According to the August 2011 report "Women in STEM: A Gender Gap to Innovation", the Department of Commerce found the following:

(A) "According to the Census Bureau's 2009 American Community Survey (ACS), women comprise 48 percent of the U.S. workforce but just 24 percent of STEM workers.".

(B) "[B]etween 2000 and 2009, women's share of the STEM workforce remained constant at 24 percent, while their share of all col-

lege-educated workers increased from 46 to 49 percent''.

(C) ''The ACS data on undergraduate fields of study show that women account for nearly half of employed college graduates age 25 and over, but only about 25 percent of employed STEM degree holders and an even smaller share—just about 20 percent—of STEM degree holders working in STEM jobs.''.

(5) In 2007, underrepresented minority groups comprised 33.2 percent of the college-age population of the United States, but only 17.7 percent of undergraduate students earning a baccalaureate degree in a STEM field.

(6) The Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, found that, while freshmen from underrepresented minority groups express an interest in pursuing a STEM undergraduate degree at the same rate as all other freshmen, only 22.1 percent of Latino students, 18.4 percent of African-American students, and 18.8 percent of Native American students studying in STEM fields complete their degree within 5 years, compared to an approximate 33 percent and 42 percent

5-year completion rate for White and Asian students, respectively.

(7) According to the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., no one race or ethnic category will be a majority by 2050, and as the United States works to remain competitive in the world of technological innovation, the United States should address the need to increase the number of individuals from underrepresented minority segments of the population who work in engineering.

(b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Director of the National Science Foundation, acting through the Education and Human Resources Directorate and not less than 1 research directorate of the National Science Foundation, shall award grants to eligible entities, on a competitive basis, to enable such eligible entities to carry out the activities described in subsection (e), in order to increase the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

(c) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this section, the term ''eligible entity'' means—

(1) a department of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics at an institution of higher

education, as defined under section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001);

(2) a consortium of departments described in paragraph (1);

(3) a department or consortium described in this subsection, in partnership with a department, college, or school of education at such institution of higher education; or

(4) a nonprofit organization, which may include—

(A) a nonprofit scientific or professional society or organization that represents one or more science or engineering disciplines; or

(B) a nonprofit organization that has the primary mission of advancing the participation of underrepresented segments of the population in science and engineering.

(d) APPLICATION.—Each eligible entity that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Director of the National Science Foundation at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Director of the National Science Foundation may reasonably require.

(e) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under this section shall use such grant

funds to carry out the following activities designed to increase the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics:

(1) Online workshops.

(2) Mentoring programs that partner science, technology, engineering, or mathematics professionals with students.

(3) Internships for undergraduate and graduate students in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

(4) Conducting outreach programs that provide elementary school and secondary school students with opportunities to increase their exposure to the fields of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

(5) Such additional programs as the Director of the National Science Foundation may determine.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2013, 2014, and 2015.

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