

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 601

To ensure that significantly more students graduate college with the international knowledge and experience essential for success in today's global economy through the establishment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program in the Department of Education.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 9, 2017

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. REED, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. BROWN) 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 ensure that significantly more students graduate college with the international knowledge and experience essential for success in today's global economy through the establishment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program in the Department of Education.

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 “Senator Paul Simon  
5 Study Abroad Program Act of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) To prepare students for success in the mod-  
4 ern global economy, opportunities for study abroad  
5 should be included as part of a well-rounded edu-  
6 cation.

7 (2) Study abroad programs provide students  
8 with unparalleled access to international knowledge,  
9 an unmatched opportunity to learn foreign lan-  
10 guages, and a unique environment for developing  
11 cultural understanding, all of which are knowledge  
12 and skills needed in today's global economy.

13 (3) Less than 2 percent of all enrolled postsec-  
14 ondary students in the United States study abroad  
15 for credit in any given year, and minority students,  
16 first generation college students, community college  
17 students, and students with disabilities are signifi-  
18 cantly underrepresented in study abroad participa-  
19 tion.

20 (4) Congress authorized the establishment of  
21 the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study  
22 Abroad Fellowship Program pursuant to section 104  
23 of the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets Act,  
24 2004 (division H of Public Law 108–199). Pursuant  
25 to its mandate, the Lincoln Commission submitted  
26 to Congress and the President a report of its rec-

1       ommendations for greatly expanding the opportunity  
2       for students at institutions of higher education in  
3       the United States to study abroad, with special em-  
4       phasis on studying in developing nations.

5           (5) According to the Lincoln Commission,  
6       “[e]xperience shows that leadership from adminis-  
7       trators and faculty will drive the number of study  
8       abroad participants higher and improve the quality  
9       of programs. Such leadership is the only way that  
10      study abroad will become an integral part of the un-  
11      dergraduate experience.”. A competitive grant pro-  
12      gram is necessary to encourage and support such  
13      leadership.

14 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

15       The purposes of this Act are—

16           (1) to ensure that significantly more students  
17       have access to quality study abroad opportunities;

18           (2) to ensure that the diversity of students  
19       studying abroad reflects the diversity of students  
20       and institutions of higher education in the United  
21       States;

22           (3) to encourage greater diversity in study  
23       abroad destinations by increasing the portion of  
24       study abroad that takes place in nontraditional

1 study abroad destinations, especially in developing  
2 countries; and

3 (4) to encourage a greater commitment by in-  
4 stitutions of higher education to expand study  
5 abroad opportunities.

6 **SEC. 4. SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM.**

7 Section 741 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20  
8 U.S.C. 1138) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (a)—

10 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (12) and  
11 (13) as paragraphs (13) and (14), respectively;  
12 and

13 (B) by inserting after paragraph (11) the  
14 following:

15 “(12) awarding grants under the Senator Paul  
16 Simon Study Abroad Program described in sub-  
17 section (g);” and

18 (2) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(g) SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PRO-  
20 GRAM.—

21 “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

22 “(A) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDU-  
23 CATION.—The term ‘institution of higher edu-  
24 cation’ has the meaning given the term in sec-  
25 tion 101(a).

1           “(B) NATIONAL OF THE UNITED  
2 STATES.—The term ‘national of the United  
3 States’ means a national of the United States  
4 or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent res-  
5 idence (as those terms are defined in section  
6 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8  
7 U.S.C. 1101)).

8           “(C) NONTRADITIONAL STUDY ABROAD  
9 DESTINATION.—The term ‘nontraditional study  
10 abroad destination’ means a location that is de-  
11 termined by the Secretary to be a less common  
12 destination for students who study abroad.

13           “(D) STUDENT.—The term ‘student’  
14 means a national of the United States who is  
15 enrolled at an institution of higher education lo-  
16 cated within the United States.

17           “(E) STUDY ABROAD.—The term ‘study  
18 abroad’ means an educational program of  
19 study, work, research, internship, or combina-  
20 tion thereof that is conducted outside the  
21 United States and that carries academic credit.

22           “(2) SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD  
23 PROGRAM.—

24           “(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is estab-  
25 lished in the Department a program to be

1 called the ‘Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad  
2 Program’.

3 “(B) OBJECTIVES.—The objectives of the  
4 program established under subparagraph (A)  
5 are, that not later than 10 years after the date  
6 of enactment of the Senator Paul Simon Study  
7 Abroad Program Act of 2017—

8 “(i) not less than 1,000,000 under-  
9 graduate students will study abroad annu-  
10 ally;

11 “(ii) the demographics of study  
12 abroad participation will reflect the demo-  
13 graphics of the United States under-  
14 graduate population by increasing the par-  
15 ticipation of underrepresented groups; and

16 “(iii) an increasing portion of study  
17 abroad will take place in nontraditional  
18 study abroad destinations, with a substan-  
19 tial portion of such increases in developing  
20 countries.

21 “(C) COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO INSTITU-  
22 TIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—In order to ac-  
23 complish the objectives set forth in subpara-  
24 graph (B), the Secretary shall award grants on  
25 a competitive basis to institutions of higher

1 education, individually or in a consortium,  
2 based on applications by the institutions that—

3 “(i) set forth detailed plans for using  
4 grant funds to further such objectives;

5 “(ii) include an institutional commit-  
6 ment to expanding access to study abroad;

7 “(iii) include plans for evaluating  
8 progress made in increasing access to  
9 study abroad;

10 “(iv) describe how increases in study  
11 abroad participation achieved through the  
12 grant will be sustained in subsequent  
13 years; and

14 “(v) demonstrate that the programs  
15 have established health and safety guide-  
16 lines and procedures.

17 “(D) NONGOVERNMENTAL INSTITU-  
18 TIONS.—Consortia of institutions of higher edu-  
19 cation applying for grants described in subpara-  
20 graph (C) may include nongovernmental institu-  
21 tions that provide and promote study abroad  
22 opportunities for students.

23 “(E) COMMISSION ON THE ABRAHAM LIN-  
24 COLN STUDY ABROAD FELLOWSHIP PRO-  
25 GRAM.—In administering the program, the Sec-

1           retary shall take fully into account the rec-  
2           ommendations of the Commission on the Abra-  
3           ham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Pro-  
4           gram, established pursuant to section 104 of  
5           the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets  
6           Act, 2004 (division H of Public Law 108–199).

7           “(F) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out  
8           this paragraph, the Secretary shall consult with  
9           representatives of diverse institutions of higher  
10          education, educational policy organizations, and  
11          others with appropriate expertise.

12          “(3) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than Decem-  
13          ber 31 of each year following the date of enactment  
14          of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program  
15          Act of 2017, the Secretary shall submit to the Com-  
16          mittee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
17          of the Senate and the Committee on Education and  
18          the Workforce of the House of Representatives a re-  
19          port on the implementation of this subsection during  
20          the prior fiscal year.

21          “(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—  
22          There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
23          this subsection such sums as may be necessary for  
24          fiscal year 2018 and each subsequent fiscal year.”.

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