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(Original Signature of Member)

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R.

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a Frontline Providers Loan Repayment Program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a Frontline Providers Loan Repayment Program.

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 “Access to Frontline
5 Health Care Act of 2013”.

1 **SEC. 2. FRONTLINE PROVIDERS LOAN REPAYMENT PRO-**
2 **GRAM.**

3 Part D of title III of the Public Health Service Act
4 (42 U.S.C. 254b et seq.) is amended—

5 (1) by redesignating the second subpart XI (as
6 added by section 10333 of Public Law 111–148) as
7 subpart XII;

8 (2) by redesignating the second section 340H
9 (as added by such section 10333) as section 340I;
10 and

11 (3) by adding at the end the following:

12 **“Subpart XIII—Frontline Health Care Services**

13 **“SEC. 340J. FRONTLINE PROVIDERS LOAN REPAYMENT**
14 **PROGRAM.**

15 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish
16 and carry out a Frontline Providers Loan Repayment Pro-
17 gram (in this section referred to as the ‘Loan Repayment
18 Program’) under which, pursuant to contracts in accord-
19 ance with this section—

20 “(1) the Secretary agrees to make student loan
21 repayments; and

22 “(2) the individual agrees to serve as a health
23 professional for a period of full-time service of not
24 less than 2 years at a health care facility serving a
25 frontline care scarcity area.

1 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to participate in
2 the Loan Repayment Program, an individual must—

3 “(1) submit an application to participate in the
4 Loan Repayment Program in such form and manner
5 and at such time as specified by the Secretary; and

6 “(2) sign and submit to the Secretary, at the
7 time of submittal of such application, a written con-
8 tract (described in subsection (d)).

9 “(c) PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An individual becomes a
11 participant in the Loan Repayment Program only
12 upon the approval of the Secretary of the individ-
13 ual’s application submitted under subsection (b)(1)
14 and the Secretary’s acceptance of the contract sub-
15 mitted by the individual under subsection (b)(2).

16 “(2) PREFERENCE.—In awarding contracts
17 under this section, the Secretary shall give pref-
18 erence to applicants who have undertaken training
19 or coursework in interdisciplinary studies.

20 “(3) RECRUITMENT FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY
21 PROGRAMS.—The Secretary shall—

22 “(A) determine the frontline care scarcity
23 areas in which to place contract recipients
24 under this section; and

1 “(B) in making such determination, give
2 preference to areas with a demonstrated pro-
3 gram of interdisciplinary health care, or with
4 demonstrated plans to initiate interdisciplinary
5 approaches to community health care.

6 “(4) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide
7 written notice to an individual promptly upon the
8 Secretary’s approving, under paragraph (1), of the
9 individual’s participation in the Loan Repayment
10 Program.

11 “(d) CONTRACT.—The contract described in this sub-
12 section is a written contract between the Secretary and
13 an individual that contains—

14 “(1) an agreement that—

15 “(A) the Secretary agrees to provide the
16 individual with student loan repayment (de-
17 scribed in subsection (e)) for a period of time
18 as determined by the Secretary, to pay off debts
19 incurred during the course of the study or pro-
20 gram described in subsection (g)(2)(B); and

21 “(B) the individual agrees—

22 “(i) to accept provision of such a stu-
23 dent loan repayment to the individual; and

24 “(ii) to provide frontline care services
25 for a period of full-time service of not less

1 than 2 years at a health care facility serv-
2 ing a frontline care scarcity area;

3 “(2) a provision that any financial obligation of
4 the United States arising out of a contract entered
5 into under this section and any obligation of the in-
6 dividual which is conditioned thereon, is contingent
7 upon funds being appropriated for student loan re-
8 payment under this section;

9 “(3) a statement of the damages to which the
10 United States is entitled, under subsection (f), for
11 the individual’s breach of the contract; and

12 “(4) such other statements as the Secretary
13 deems appropriate of the rights and liabilities of the
14 Secretary and of the individual, not inconsistent
15 with the provisions of this section.

16 “(e) STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT.—

17 “(1) AMOUNT.—The amount of an annual stu-
18 dent loan repayment under this section on behalf of
19 an individual shall be determined by the Secretary,
20 and shall take into consideration the need to pay a
21 sufficient amount to enable recruiting of health care
22 providers into the loan repayment program under
23 this section.

24 “(2) PAYMENTS DIRECTLY TO LOAN PRO-
25 VIDER.—The Secretary may contract with an indi-

1 vidual’s loan provider, for the payment to the loan
2 provider, on behalf of the individual, of the amounts
3 of a student loan repayment described in paragraph
4 (1).

5 “(f) BREACH OF CONTRACT.—If an individual
6 breaches a written contract under this section by failing
7 to begin such individual’s service obligation, or to complete
8 such service obligation, the United States shall be entitled
9 to recover from the individual an amount that is equal
10 to the sum of—

11 “(1) the total amount which has been paid to
12 the individual, or on behalf of the individual, under
13 the contract; and

14 “(2) any amount of interest, as determined by
15 the Secretary.

16 “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

17 “(1) The term ‘frontline care scarcity area’
18 means an area, population group, or facility that—

19 “(A) is designated as a health professional
20 shortage area under section 332; or

21 “(B) is designated by the State in which
22 the area is located as having a shortage of
23 frontline care services.

24 “(2) The term ‘frontline care services’ means
25 health care services—

1 “(A) in the field of general surgery, optom-
2 etry, ophthalmology, chiropractic, physical ther-
3 apy, audiology, speech language pathology,
4 pharmacies, public health, podiatric medicine,
5 dietetics, occupational therapy, general pediat-
6 rics, respiratory therapy, medical technology,
7 otolaryngology, or radiologic technology; and

8 “(B) provided by a general surgeon, op-
9 tometrist, ophthalmologist, chiropractor, phys-
10 ical therapist, audiologist, speech language pa-
11 thologist, pharmacist, public health profes-
12 sional, podiatric physician, registered dietician,
13 occupational therapist, pediatrician, respiratory
14 therapist, medical technologist, otolaryngologist,
15 or radiologic technologist who has completed an
16 appropriate course of study or program, offered
17 by an accredited institution of higher education
18 in the United States.

19 “(h) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall begin
20 implementation of the loan repayment program under this
21 section within 180 days of the date of the enactment of
22 this section.”.