

Expanding Disability Access to Higher Education Act

To increase access to and graduation from postsecondary education for people with disabilities

Section 1: Short title

Section 2: Findings and Purposes

- People with disabilities enroll in and graduate from postsecondary education at a rate far lower than the general population.
- People with disabilities earn far less than those without disabilities and have one of the highest rates of poverty of any group in the country.
- Those with postsecondary certificates and degrees earn far more than those without.
- The goal of this Act is to increase the participation of people with disabilities in postsecondary education, from certificate programs through terminal degrees.

Section 3: Preparing and Supporting Students with Disabilities for Postsecondary Education

This section amends 402A-F of HEA Title IV, the TRIO programs (including Upward Bound, UBMS, VUB, Student Support Services, Talent Search, Education Opportunity Centers, and McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement), to increase the number of participants with disabilities served by the programs. This section increases appropriations for that purpose. The Act creates an optional supplemental grant to which existing TRIO programs can apply for the purposes of enrolling additional students with disabilities. Funding can be used to recruit and support those TRIO-eligible students with disabilities with services designed by the applicants.

Section 4: Staff Development Activities

This section reauthorizes HEA Title VII Part D Subpart 1 (Sec 761-765) to provide professional development and technical assistance regarding people with disabilities to faculty and staff in institutions of higher education in an effort to increase their knowledge regarding students with disabilities and the accommodations necessary to support their successful education.

Section 5: Offices of Training, Technical Assistance, and Accommodations Grant Program

This section authorizes the creation of Offices of Accessibility on college campuses, with priority given to community colleges. Offices are charged with providing students, faculty and staff with a central location for accessing resources to support individuals with disabilities, including students, faculty, and staff.

Section 6: Data Collection and Reporting

This section directs the U.S. Department of Education to collect enrollment, persistence and attrition information regarding students with disabilities, and to use such information in the determination of future TRIO awards. It also requests a GAO report tallying the number of people with disabilities currently in higher education generally, and TRIO programs specifically.

For further information or to co-sponsor, contact Rachel Feldman (Rachel_Feldman@casey.senate.gov or 8-3782) or Michael Gamel-McCormick (Michael_Gamel-McCormick@aging.senate.gov or 4-4193) with Senator Casey.