

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To allow qualified volunteer first responders to qualify for public service loan forgiveness.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. TESTER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To allow qualified volunteer first responders to qualify for public service loan forgiveness.

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 “Volunteer First Re-
5 sponder Loan Forgiveness Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. LOAN FORGIVENESS FOR VOLUNTEER FIRST RE-**
7 **SPONDERS.**

8 Section 455(m)(3) of the Higher Education Act of
9 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(m)(3)) is amended—

10 (1) in subparagraph (B)—

1 (A) in clause (i), by striking “or” after the
2 semicolon;

3 (B) in clause (ii), by striking the period at
4 the end and inserting “; or”; and

5 (C) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(iii) volunteer work as a qualified
7 volunteer first responder in accordance
8 with subparagraph (C).”; and

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

10 “(C) QUALIFIED VOLUNTEER FIRST RE-
11 SPONDER.—

12 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘quali-
13 fied volunteer first responder’ means an in-
14 dividual who—

15 “(I) does volunteer work for a
16 public safety organization (which may
17 include firefighters, law enforcement
18 officers, emergency medical personnel,
19 or other first responders to emer-
20 gencies); and

21 “(II) is certified as a firefighter,
22 law enforcement officer, emergency
23 medical services provider, or other re-
24 sponder in the State, unit of general
25 local government, or Indian tribe in

1 evant public safety organization;

2 and

3 “(bb) does not exceed the

4 equivalent of 200 hours per

5 year.”.

6 **SEC. 3. REGULATIONS.**

7 The Secretary of Education shall promulgate, after
8 consultation with public safety organizations (which shall
9 include firefighter, law enforcement officer, and emergency
10 responder organizations), regulations to carry out the
11 amendments made by section 2, including regulations re-
12 lating to—

13 (1) the minimum volunteer time required for a
14 qualified volunteer first responder to be treated as
15 an individual employed in a full-time job for pur-
16 poses of section 455(m) of the Higher Education
17 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(m)); and

18 (2) the process of tracking and verifying that
19 volunteer time.

20 **SEC. 4. ENGAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY ORGANIZATIONS.**

21 The Secretary of Education shall develop a plan re-
22 garding how the Department of Education will—

23 (1) disseminate information and raise aware-
24 ness about eligibility for qualified volunteer first re-
25 sponders for public service loan forgiveness under

1 section 455(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
2 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(m)) (as amended by this Act); and
3 (2) engage qualified volunteer first responders
4 and public safety organizations in the process of
5 tracking and verifying volunteer hours for purposes
6 of public service loan forgiveness under such section.