



Advancing Competency-Based Education Act of 2019

*Sponsored by
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As Congress works to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, it is critical that we use this opportunity to ensure that the higher education system meets more students where they are – on the job, raising a family, and balancing other obligations outside of the traditional academic classroom. Competency-based education is an innovative model for higher education where credits are awarded based on students demonstrating their knowledge, rather than the traditional time-based model. In these programs, students can advance through their degree at their own pace, and as a result, they may take less time and pay less than traditional higher education degree programs. This bill would create a demonstration project to allow higher education programs to establish and grow competency-based education programs to serve more students. Institutions participating in the demonstration would receive important flexibility to meet current federal requirements in the law that were established to serve traditional academic programs. The demonstration project would increase transparency of competency-based education outcomes that will be used to help determine the best practices to grow and regulate competency-based education most effectively going forward.

This bill was endorsed by the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN), New America, Jobs for the Future, Higher Learning Advocates, Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU), Colorado State University-Global (CSU-Global), Capella, and Western Governors University (WGU).

Supporting responsible innovation in higher education:

- Creating a competency-based education demonstration project within the Higher Education Act to allow higher education institutions to request additional flexibility from current statutory and regulatory requirements that can be barriers to implementing competency-based education programs.
- Increasing transparency in competency-based education programs by requiring an annual evaluation of each competency-based education program in the demonstration project to determine program quality, student degree completion rates, and program graduates' employment outcomes.
- Tracking outcomes of students served in competency-based education programs compared to their peers who complete traditional academic programs.
- Prepares students for the workforce by requiring programs to align their courses with career pathways and the needs of local employers.
- Establishing a Competency-Based Education Council to make recommendations and report on how best to support and responsibly scale the development of competency-based education.