H. R.

To require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to carry out a study to add to the scientific knowledge on reducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and well-being, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Ryan introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to carry out a study to add to the scientific knowledge on reducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and well-being, and for other purposes.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “Teacher Health and Wellness Act”.

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

5 Congress finds the following:
(1) High levels of stress are adversely affecting teachers’ health. Teachers with high levels of stress are less effective in raising student achievement than their healthier peers.

(2) Elementary school teachers who have greater stress and show more symptoms of depression create classroom environments that are less conducive to learning.

(3) Stress is contributing to the high turnover rate among teachers, which causes instability for students and communities. This leads to higher costs for school districts to train new teachers and hinders students’ academic success.

(4) School organization, low job autonomy, and a lack of ability to access teacher leadership opportunities are main sources of teacher stress. If teachers are unable to manage their stress levels, this leads to lower level teacher instruction, which then impacts student well-being.

(5) High teacher turnover brings down students’ math and language arts scores.

(6) According to a 2014 Gallup survey, 46 percent of teachers experience high daily stress during the school year. This percentage is tied for the highest rate of high daily stress among occupations and
is a significant increase from teacher stress levels in 1985.

SEC. 3. STUDY ON REDUCING TEACHER STRESS AND INCREASING TEACHER RETENTION AND WELL-BEING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National Institutes of Health shall carry out a five-year study on reducing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and well-being by implementing and analyzing the results of any of the following programs:

(1) Workplace wellness programs that are designed to improve teacher health, attendance, and engagement.

(2) Social emotional learning programs that help teachers improve student engagement in the classroom.

(3) Teacher stress management programs that improve teacher performance.

(4) Mentoring and induction programs during the school year and teacher pre-service programs that improve teacher well-being.

(5) Organizational interventions, such as principal training programs, that reduce stress through supervisor/peer support and increased opportunities for teachers to participate in professional learning.
4 communities, teacher leadership positions, and decisionmaking regarding school interventions and management.

(6) Teacher residency programs that provide mental health and psychological support.

(7) Complementary health approaches, such as mindfulness meditation, that improve teacher performance.

(8) School reorganization that creates the conditions to facilitate the transmission and sharing of knowledge among teachers.

(9) Other innovative evidence-based approaches that reduce stress and increase well-being in the teaching profession, which may include increased compensation.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the end of the study carried out under subsection (a), the Director shall submit to the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate a report including—

(A) the results of the study carried out under subsection (a); and
(B) recommendations for—

(i) decreasing teacher stress and increasing teacher retention and well-being;

and

(ii) lowering stress-related health care costs for teachers.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—The Director shall make publicly available the report submitted under paragraph (1).

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH APPROACH.—The term “complementary health approach” includes integrative health care, adjunctive health care, and functional medicine.

(2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

(d) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.—No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this Act. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts otherwise authorized.