A BILL

To establish a Federal School Classroom Natural Light Program to provide financial assistance to public school districts for the installation of natural-lighting systems in classrooms, and to condition the receipt of Federal financial assistance by public school districts on participation in such program.

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the **"School Classroom Natural Light Act of 2026"**.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) Findings.—Congress finds the following:

1. Adequate classroom lighting is an important component of a safe, healthy, and effective learning environment for students and teachers.

2. Natural daylight can be provided through building features and technologies including skylights, windows, and fiber-optic daylighting systems.

3. Many public school buildings rely primarily upon electric artificial lighting, including light-emitting diode and fluorescent lighting, during regular classroom hours.

4. Public school districts frequently face significant capital costs when modifying existing school buildings to increase the availability of natural light in classrooms.

5. A Federal financial assistance program can assist public school districts in making capital improvements that increase the availability of natural light while reducing the financial burden associated with such improvements.

6. A uniform Federal program can establish minimum standards for participation, ensure accountability for the expenditure of Federal funds, and facilitate the collection of information concerning the implementation of natural-lighting improvements in public school classrooms.

(b) Purpose.—The purposes of this Act are—

1. to establish a Federal program providing financial assistance to public school districts that elect to make natural light the primary source of illumination in classrooms;

2. to assist public school districts in installing diffused-lens skylights, additional or enlarged windows, solar fiber-optic daylighting systems, and other qualifying systems capable of providing natural illumination to classrooms; and

3. to establish participation requirements applicable to public school districts receiving Federal financial assistance, consistent with the authority of Congress under the Constitution.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ARTIFICIAL LIGHT.—

The term “artificial light” means illumination generated primarily by an electrically powered lighting system, including a light-emitting diode lighting system or fluorescent lighting system.

(2) CLASSROOM.—

The term “classroom” means a room in a public elementary school or secondary school that is regularly used for the instruction of students during the regular school day.

(3) COVERED FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

The term “covered Federal financial assistance” means Federal financial assistance provided to a public school district, directly or indirectly, through a grant, cooperative agreement, formula grant, project grant, or other Federal assistance program, except as specifically excluded by the Secretary pursuant to regulations promulgated under section 8.

(4) DEPARTMENT.—

The term “Department” means the Department of Health and Human Services.

(5) ELIGIBLE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT.—

The term “eligible public school district” means a local educational agency, as defined in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801), that—

(A) is a public school district; and

(B) has submitted a Notice of Intent under section 4.

(6) NATURAL LIGHT.—

The term “natural light” means illumination originating from daylight outside a school building and transmitted into an occupied classroom through windows, skylights, solar tubes, fiber-optic daylighting systems, or another qualifying daylighting system approved by the Secretary.

(7) PRIMARY LIGHTING SOURCE.—

The term “primary lighting source”, with respect to a classroom, means the lighting source that provides the greater proportion of the usable illumination in the classroom during periods in which instruction is ordinarily conducted.

(8) SECRETARY.—

The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

(9) SOLAR FIBER-OPTIC SYSTEM.—

The term “solar fiber-optic system” means a system that collects daylight outside a school building and transmits such daylight through optical fibers or substantially similar technology into one or more classrooms for purposes of illumination.

SEC. 4. NOTICE OF INTENT.

(a) Establishment.—

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish a procedure under which a public school district may submit a Notice of Intent to participate in the Federal School Classroom Natural Light Program established under section 5.

(b) Contents.—

A Notice of Intent shall include—

1. the name and address of the public school district;

2. the number and location of classrooms that the district proposes to bring into compliance with this Act;

3. a description of the proposed natural-lighting improvements;

4. an estimate of the total cost of the proposed improvements;

5. a proposed schedule for installation and completion;

6. a certification by an authorized official of the district that the district intends, upon completion of the project, to make natural light the primary lighting source in each participating classroom; and

7. such additional information as the Secretary determines is reasonably necessary to administer this Act.

(c) No preapproval required.—

Submission of a Notice of Intent shall not constitute an obligation on the part of the United States to approve or fund a particular project unless and until the district satisfies the applicable requirements established by the Secretary.

SEC. 5. FEDERAL SCHOOL CLASSROOM NATURAL LIGHT PROGRAM.

(a) Establishment.—

The Secretary shall establish and administer a program to provide financial assistance to eligible public school districts for the installation of qualifying natural-lighting systems in classrooms.

(b) Eligible projects.—

Financial assistance under this Act may be used for—

1. the installation of diffused-lens skylights;

2. the installation, enlargement, replacement, or modification of windows for the purpose of increasing the amount of natural light entering classrooms;

3. the installation of solar fiber-optic daylighting systems;

4. structural, electrical, roofing, architectural, engineering, or related work reasonably necessary to install a qualifying natural-lighting system; and

5. such other daylighting technologies as the Secretary determines are substantially equivalent to the technologies described in paragraphs (1) through (3).

(c) Federal share.—

The amount of a grant under this Act for an eligible project shall not exceed **50 percent of the total eligible cost of the project**.

(d) Non-Federal share.—

The remaining cost of an eligible project shall be provided by the public school district from non-Federal sources, except to the extent otherwise authorized by Federal law.

(e) Multiple projects.—

A public school district may submit applications for multiple schools or projects, subject to such aggregate funding limitations as the Secretary may establish by regulation.

(f) Priority.—

In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary may give priority to projects that—

1. serve a large number of students;

2. serve economically disadvantaged communities;

3. involve classrooms with limited existing access to natural light;

4. are located in older school facilities requiring substantial modernization; or

5. can be completed at a comparatively low cost per classroom.

SEC. 6. REQUIREMENT CONCERNING PRIMARY CLASSROOM LIGHTING SOURCE.

(a) Participation requirement.—

Beginning on the first full school year occurring after the date established by the Secretary under section 8, a public school district that receives covered Federal financial assistance shall—

1. submit and maintain a Notice of Intent under section 4; and

2. implement a plan under which natural light is the primary lighting source for classrooms of the district in accordance with the requirements of this Act.

(b) Artificial lighting.—

A public school district participating in the program may maintain artificial lighting systems in classrooms for purposes including—

1. use when natural light is insufficient to provide adequate illumination;

2. use during nighttime instruction or other periods when daylight is unavailable;

3. emergency use;

4. compliance with applicable health, safety, accessibility, building, or occupational requirements; and

5. any other circumstance authorized by the Secretary.

(c) Determination of compliance.—

The Secretary shall establish objective standards for determining whether natural light constitutes the primary lighting source of a classroom.

Such standards shall take into account—

1. the amount and distribution of usable illumination;

2. seasonal variations in available daylight;

3. geographic location;

4. classroom configuration;

5. student and teacher safety;

6. applicable building and accessibility requirements; and

7. the reasonable use of artificial lighting when natural light is insufficient.

SEC. 7. CONDITION ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) In general.—

Except as provided in subsection (d), a public school district that, after the applicable implementation date established under section 8—

1. continues to maintain artificial light as the primary lighting source in its classrooms; and

2. has not submitted a Notice of Intent under section 4,

shall be ineligible to receive covered Federal financial assistance.

(b) Withholding of Federal financial assistance.—

Notwithstanding any other provision of Federal law, the Secretary, in consultation with the head of each Federal agency administering covered Federal financial assistance, shall withhold covered Federal financial assistance otherwise payable to a public school district described in subsection (a).

(c) Scope of withholding.—

The withholding requirement under this section shall apply to covered Federal financial assistance that is otherwise payable to the public school district during the period of noncompliance.

(d) Exceptions.—

The Secretary may waive the withholding requirement with respect to a public school district if the Secretary determines that—

1. compliance would result in an immediate and substantial threat to the health or safety of students or school personnel;

2. the district lacks a reasonable opportunity to comply because of circumstances beyond the control of the district;

3. Federal law independently prohibits the district from using the applicable Federal financial assistance for purposes of compliance with this Act; or

4. withholding the particular Federal financial assistance would be inconsistent with an express statutory requirement governing that assistance.

(e) Restoration of eligibility.—

A public school district whose Federal financial assistance has been withheld under this section shall become eligible to receive such assistance upon—

1. submission of a Notice of Intent under section 4; and

2. certification to the Secretary that the district has adopted a plan reasonably designed to satisfy the requirements of this Act.

SEC. 8. REGULATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION.

(a) Regulations.—

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall promulgate regulations necessary to carry out this Act.

(b) Interagency coordination.—

The Secretary shall coordinate with—

1. the Secretary of Education;

2. the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency;

3. the Secretary of Energy; and

4. such other Federal agencies as the Secretary determines appropriate,

to ensure consistent administration of this Act and coordination with existing Federal programs relating to public schools, school facilities, energy efficiency, public health, and building modernization.

(c) Delegation.—

The Secretary may delegate administration of grants under this Act to an appropriate Federal agency or component of the Department, subject to such terms and conditions as the Secretary determines appropriate.

(d) Model standards.—

The Secretary shall publish model technical standards for—

1. daylight availability;

2. glare reduction;

3. thermal performance;

4. energy performance;

5. accessibility;

6. student and teacher safety; and

7. measurement of whether natural light constitutes the primary lighting source of a classroom.

SEC. 9. ENFORCEMENT AND PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS.

(a) Notice of noncompliance.—

Before withholding Federal financial assistance under section 7, the Secretary shall provide the affected public school district with—

1. written notice of the alleged noncompliance;

2. a description of the Federal financial assistance proposed to be withheld;

3. a reasonable period, of not less than 60 days, in which to submit a corrective plan; and

4. an opportunity for an administrative hearing in accordance with procedures established by the Secretary.

(b) Final determination.—

Federal financial assistance may not be withheld under section 7 until the Secretary has issued a written final determination of noncompliance.

(c) Judicial review.—

A final determination under this section shall be subject to judicial review in accordance with applicable Federal law.

SEC. 10. FUNDING.

(a) Authorization of appropriations.—

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary—

1. $500,000,000 for fiscal year 2027;

2. $750,000,000 for fiscal year 2028; and

3. $1,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2029 through 2032,

to carry out this Act.

(b) Availability.—

Amounts appropriated pursuant to this section shall remain available until expended.

(c) Administrative expenses.—

Not more than 5 percent of amounts appropriated under this Act for a fiscal year may be used by the Secretary for administrative expenses associated with carrying out this Act.

SEC. 11. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report describing—

1. the number of public school districts submitting Notices of Intent;

2. the number of schools and classrooms participating in the program;

3. the amount of Federal financial assistance awarded;

4. the total cost of projects assisted under this Act;

5. the types of natural-lighting systems installed;

6. the number of classrooms in which natural light has become the primary lighting source;

7. the amount of Federal financial assistance withheld under section 7;

8. the extent to which participating districts have reduced their reliance upon artificial classroom lighting; and

9. such other information as the Secretary considers appropriate.

SEC. 12. NONDISCRIMINATION AND ACCESSIBILITY.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize a public school district to install or operate a natural-lighting system in a manner that violates—

1. the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.);

2. section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794);

3. the Fair Housing Act, to the extent applicable;

4. Federal or State building and fire safety requirements; or

5. any other applicable Federal civil rights or accessibility requirement.

SEC. 13. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed—

1. to require a classroom to be operated without artificial lighting when natural light is insufficient to provide adequate illumination;

2. to prohibit the installation or maintenance of artificial lighting systems in classrooms;

3. to require a public school district to undertake construction that would violate applicable building, safety, accessibility, or historic-preservation requirements; or

4. to alter any obligation of a public school district under Federal law concerning the provision of a free appropriate public education or other legally required educational services.

SEC. 14. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this Act, or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect the other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

SEC. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE.

Except as otherwise provided in this Act, this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment.