

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To amend section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 with regard to waivers of statutory and regulatory requirements.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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

A BILL

To amend section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 with regard to waivers of statutory and regulatory requirements.

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 “State Innovation Pilot
5 Act of 2011”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

7 The purposes of this Act are—

- 8 (1) to support State, local, and tribal leadership
9 and innovation in preparing all students to meet
10 State-developed college and career ready academic

1 content standards and student academic achieve-
2 ment standards, by establishing a process to permit
3 State, local, and tribal educational leaders to imple-
4 ment alternative and innovative strategies to im-
5 prove student academic achievement and otherwise
6 meet the purposes of the Elementary and Secondary
7 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et. seq.);
8 and

9 (2) to direct the Secretary of Education to
10 defer to State, local, and tribal judgments regarding
11 how best to accomplish the purposes of the Elemen-
12 tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

13 **SEC. 3. WAIVERS OF STATUTORY AND REGULATORY RE-**
14 **QUIREMENTS.**

15 Section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
16 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7861) is amended—

17 (1) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the
18 following:

19 “(a) IN GENERAL.—

20 “(1) REQUEST FOR WAIVER.—A State edu-
21 cational agency, local educational agency, or Indian
22 tribe that receives funds under a program authorized
23 under this Act may submit a request to the Sec-
24 retary to waive any statutory or regulatory require-
25 ment of this Act.

1 “(2) RECEIPT OF WAIVER.—Except as provided
2 in subsection (c), the Secretary shall waive any stat-
3 utory or regulatory requirement of this Act for a
4 State educational agency, local educational agency,
5 Indian tribe, or school (through a local educational
6 agency), that submits a waiver request pursuant to
7 this subsection.”;

8 (2) in subsection (b)—

9 (A) in paragraph (1)—

10 (i) in the matter preceding subpara-
11 graph (A), by inserting “, which shall in-
12 clude a plan” after “waiver request to the
13 Secretary”;

14 (ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking
15 “and how the waiving of those require-
16 ments will” and all that follows through
17 the end, and inserting a semicolon;

18 (iii) by redesignating subparagraph
19 (E) as subparagraph (F); and

20 (iv) by striking subparagraphs (C)
21 and (D), and inserting the following:

22 “(C) reasonably demonstrates that the
23 waiver will improve instruction for students, ad-
24 vance student academic achievement, and con-
25 tribute to student mastery of knowledge and

1 skills, consistent with the State’s college and
2 career ready academic content standards and
3 student academic achievement standards;

4 “(D) describes the methods the State edu-
5 cational agency, local educational agency, or In-
6 dian tribe will use to—

7 “(i) monitor the effectiveness of the
8 implementation of the plan; and

9 “(ii) assure regular evaluation and
10 continuous improvement of the plan;

11 “(E) as applicable to the waiver request—

12 “(i) describes the State educational
13 agency, local educational agency, or Indian
14 tribe’s process for making valid and mean-
15 ingful accountability determinations, based
16 on student academic achievement, to re-
17 view the success of schools and local edu-
18 cational agencies or Indian tribes in imple-
19 menting the State’s college and career
20 ready academic content standards and stu-
21 dent academic achievement standards;

22 “(ii) describes the State educational
23 agency, local educational agency, or Indian
24 tribe’s process for accurately and meaning-
25 fully identifying, supporting, and inter-

1 vening in underperforming schools, con-
2 sistent with applicable State or local policy;
3 and

4 “(iii) includes information on how the
5 State educational agency, local educational
6 agency, or Indian tribe will maintain and
7 improve transparency in reporting to par-
8 ents and the public on student achievement
9 and school performance, including the
10 achievement of students according to the
11 student subgroups described in subclauses
12 (I) through (IV) of section
13 1111(b)(2)(B)(viii); and”;

14 (B) in paragraph (2)(B)(i)(II), by striking
15 “(on behalf of, and based on the requests of,
16 local educational agencies)” and inserting “(on
17 their own behalf, or on behalf of, and based on
18 the requests of, local educational agencies in the
19 State)”;

20 (C) in paragraph (3)(A), in the matter
21 preceding clause (i), by inserting “or on behalf
22 of local educational agencies in the State,” after
23 “acting on its own behalf,”; and

24 (D) by adding at the end the following:

25 “(4) PEER REVIEW.—

1 “(A) PEER REVIEW TEAM.—

2 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary
3 shall establish multi-disciplinary peer re-
4 view teams and appoint members to such
5 teams, including persons who have experi-
6 ence with a State educational agency (or
7 local educational agency or Indian tribe, as
8 appropriate) and broader education reform
9 experience, to review waiver requests under
10 this section if—

11 “(I) the Secretary requests such
12 input in order to approve a waiver re-
13 quest; or

14 “(II) the Secretary intends to
15 disapprove a request.

16 “(ii) TEAM IN PLACE FOR ALL WAIV-
17 ER REQUESTS.—The Secretary may, at the
18 Secretary’s discretion, have a peer review
19 team review all waiver requests submitted
20 under this section.

21 “(B) APPLICABILITY.—The Secretary may
22 approve a waiver request under this section
23 without conducting a peer review of the request,
24 but shall use the peer review process under this
25 paragraph before disapproving such a request.

1 “(C) PURPOSE OF PEER REVIEW.—The
2 peer review process shall be designed to—

3 “(i) promote effective implementation
4 of State-developed college and career ready
5 academic content standards and student
6 academic achievement standards, through
7 State and local innovation; and

8 “(ii) provide transparent feedback to
9 State educational agencies, local edu-
10 cational agencies, or Indian tribes, de-
11 signed to strengthen the applicant’s plan
12 described under paragraph (1)(C).

13 “(D) STANDARD AND NATURE OF RE-
14 VIEW.—Peer reviewers shall conduct a good
15 faith review of waiver requests submitted to
16 them under this section. Peer reviewers shall re-
17 view such waiver requests—

18 “(i) in their totality;

19 “(ii) in deference to State and local
20 judgment; and

21 “(iii) with the goal of promoting
22 State- and local-led innovation.

23 “(5) WAIVER DETERMINATION, DEMONSTRATION,
24 AND REVISION.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
2 approve a waiver request not more than 90
3 days after the date on which such request is
4 submitted, unless the Secretary determines and
5 demonstrates that—

6 “(i) the waiver request does not meet
7 the requirements of this section;

8 “(ii) the waiver is not permitted under
9 subsection (c);

10 “(iii) the plan that is required under
11 paragraph (1)(C), and reviewed with def-
12 erence to State and local judgment, pro-
13 vides no reasonable basis to determine that
14 a waiver will enhance student academic
15 achievement; or

16 “(iv) the waiver request does not pro-
17 vide for adequate evaluation to ensure re-
18 view and continuous improvement of the
19 plan, consistent with paragraph (1)(D).

20 “(B) WAIVER DETERMINATION AND REVI-
21 SION.—If the Secretary determines and dem-
22 onstrates that the waiver request does not meet
23 the requirements of this section, the Secretary
24 shall—

25 “(i) immediately—

1 “(I) notify the State educational
2 agency, local educational agency, or
3 Indian tribe of such determination;
4 and

5 “(II) at the request of the State
6 educational agency, local educational
7 agency, or Indian tribe, provide de-
8 tailed reasons for such determination
9 in writing;

10 “(ii) offer the State educational agen-
11 cy, local educational agency, or Indian
12 tribe an opportunity to revise and resubmit
13 the waiver request not more than 60 days
14 after the date of such determination; and

15 “(iii) if the Secretary determines that
16 the resubmission does not meet the re-
17 quirements of this section, at the request
18 of the State educational agency, local edu-
19 cational agency, or Indian tribe, conduct a
20 public hearing not more than 30 days after
21 the date of such resubmission.

22 “(C) WAIVER DISAPPROVAL.—The Sec-
23 retary may disapprove a waiver request if—

24 “(i) the State educational agency,
25 local educational agency, or Indian tribe

1 has been notified and offered an oppor-
2 tunity to revise and resubmit the waiver
3 request, as described under clauses (i) and
4 (ii) of subparagraph (B); and

5 “(ii) the State educational agency,
6 local educational agency, or Indian tribe—

7 “(I) does not revise and resubmit
8 the waiver request; or

9 “(II) revises and resubmits the
10 waiver request, and the Secretary de-
11 termines that such waiver request
12 does not meet the requirements of this
13 section after a hearing conducted
14 under subparagraph (B)(iii).

15 “(D) EXTERNAL CONDITIONS.—The Sec-
16 retary shall not disapprove a waiver request
17 under this section based on conditions outside
18 the scope of the waiver request.”;

19 (3) in subsection (d)—

20 (A) in the heading, by adding “; LIMITA-
21 TIONS” after “DURATION AND EXTENSION OF
22 WAIVER”; and

23 (B) by adding at the end the following:

24 “(3) SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS.—The Secretary
25 shall not require a State educational agency, local

1 educational agency, or Indian tribe, as a condition of
2 approval of a waiver request, to—

3 “(A) include in, or delete from, such re-
4 quest, specific academic content standards or
5 academic achievement standards;

6 “(B) use specific academic assessment in-
7 struments or items; or

8 “(C) include in, or delete from, such waiv-
9 er request any criterion that specifies, defines,
10 or prescribes the standards or measures that a
11 State or local educational agency uses to estab-
12 lish, implement, or improve—

13 “(i) State academic content standards
14 or academic achievement standards;

15 “(ii) assessments;

16 “(iii) State accountability systems;

17 “(iv) systems that measure student
18 growth;

19 “(v) measures of other academic indi-
20 cators; or

21 “(vi) teacher and principal evaluation
22 systems.”;

23 (4) in subsection (e)—

24 (A) in paragraph (1)—

1 (i) by striking the heading and insert-
2 ing “WAIVER REPORTS”;

3 (ii) in the matter preceding subpara-
4 graph (A)—

5 (I) by striking “local educational
6 agency that receives” and inserting
7 “State educational agency, local edu-
8 cational agency, or Indian tribe that
9 receives”; and

10 (II) by striking “submit a report
11 to the State educational agency that”
12 and inserting “submit a report to the
13 Secretary that”;

14 (B) by striking paragraphs (2) and (3);

15 (C) by redesignating paragraph (4) as
16 paragraph (2); and

17 (D) in paragraph (2), (as redesignated by
18 subparagraph (C)), by striking “Beginning in
19 fiscal year 2002 and for each subsequent year,
20 the Secretary shall submit to the Committee”
21 and inserting “The Secretary shall annually
22 submit to the Committee”; and

23 (5) in subsection (f), by inserting “and the re-
24 cipient of the waiver has failed to make revisions
25 needed to carry out the purpose of the waiver,” after

1 “has been inadequate to justify a continuation of the
2 waiver”.