



Striving Readers Act of 2007 (S. \_\_\_\_)  
Sponsored by Senator Patty Murray and Senator Jeff Sessions

**What are the basics of the bill?**

- **Funding:** \$200 million in FY2007 with increasing funding to FY2011.
- **Purpose:** To improve student achievement in adolescent literacy for middle level and high school students by establishing adolescent literacy initiatives aimed at increasing high school graduation and college readiness.
- **Grants:** 5 year grants to states on a formula basis according to poverty and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores on NAEP. States in turn award grants competitively to school districts according to poverty, literacy levels, and the number or percentage of schools deemed in need of improvement under NCLB.
- **State Uses:** States use of funds for:
  - Creating statewide literacy teams to develop and implement literacy initiatives,
  - Providing professional development to teachers in core subjects,
  - Improving teacher education and state licensure in adolescent literacy,
  - Reporting literacy achievement to the public,
  - Participating in evaluations of the program.
- **Local Uses:** Districts use funds for
  - Developing adolescent literacy plans for each school served, including professional development
  - Training school leaders to administer adolescent literacy plan
  - Administering diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to improve literacy
  - Collecting, analyzing, and reporting literacy data.
  - Districts may also use funds to hire literacy coaches, acquire materials or interventions including software, train parents to support literacy, or connect out-of-school learning with in-school instruction.
- **Evaluation:** States submit two progress reports on literacy achievement. The U.S. Department of Education shall conduct a scientifically valid, quantitative and qualitative 5-year evaluation of the program.

**How does Striving Readers currently work?**

- The U.S. Department of Education makes competitive grants directly to school districts.
- FY2006 funding was \$29.7 million, enough for only 8 grants.
- Striving Readers is a Title I demonstration program funded solely through the appropriations process.

**How would this bill *change* Striving Readers?**

- This bill would authorize Striving Readers and expand it to serve every state according to a formula basis. States in turn would award grants competitively to districts.
- This bill would require grantees to evaluate their program but not to perform randomized trials (currently required). Randomized trials often put districts in the difficult position of providing help to some students while not providing help to others.
- This bill would give states flexibility to serve any middle or high school grade; the current program only serves grades 6-12, leaving out grades 4 and 5.

### How can Striving Readers benefit my state?

- Funding to help Kentucky address a widespread problem
  - 25% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in KY read below grade level
  - \$13 million could benefit KY (at the full funding level)

### How can Striving Readers benefit the country?

- Better literacy –
  - improves achievement in all subjects (including math and science)
  - raises graduation rates
  - ensures students have the skills needed to succeed in college and work
- If we cut the dropout rate in half, the economy would realize \$13.2 billion per year in improved wages
- If we graduated every student, we'd save \$3.7 billion per year in remediation costs
- If we graduated every student, we'd save \$17 billion per year in healthcare costs

### Why is Striving Readers important?

- Many students read below grade level
  - 29% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders read below proficient on NAEP
- Students with low literacy skills drop out of high school and college
  - Only 70% of students graduate from high school on time
  - Only 34% graduate with literacy skills needed for college or work
- Low level literacy skills cost the economy
  - The nation spends \$3.7 billion every year on remediation

### Current Federal Investment

- The federal government spends \$72 per child (\$1 billion total) for Reading First (grades K-3)
- The federal government spends 13 cents per child (\$29.7 million) for Striving Readers (grades 6-12)

### Reading First & Striving Readers: How much do we spend on each program?

