

AMERICAN TEACHER ACT

SECTION 1: SHORT TITLE

- This Act may be cited as the “American Teacher Act.”

SECTION 2: FINDINGS

- This section outlines key findings regarding the teaching profession:
 1. Teachers serve multiple roles and are pivotal for student success.
 2. Teacher shortages are a significant issue impacting education quality, leading to changes in school operations and impacting student outcomes.
 3. The teacher wage penalty has reached an all-time high, adversely affecting recruitment and retention of teachers.
 4. Many teachers juggle multiple jobs due to financial instability, particularly affecting teachers of color.
 5. The White House has called for stronger teacher compensation measures, and many states are responding with legislation.
 6. Raising awareness and compensating teachers fairly is essential for educational equity and stability.

SECTION 3: GRANTS TO SUPPORT STATE EFFORTS TO INCREASE TEACHER SALARIES

- **(a) TEACHER SALARY INCENTIVE GRANTS**
 1. Grants are provided to ensure a minimum annual salary of \$60,000 for full-time teachers, adjusted for inflation.
 2. Eligible states must submit applications detailing plans for sustainability post-grant and required assurances, including establishing salary schedules and providing compensation according to set thresholds.
 3. State agencies must allocate at least 85% of the grant funds to local educational agencies and prioritize those serving low-income communities.
- **(b) SALARY THRESHOLD**
 1. Sets a minimum salary of \$60,000 for the 2026-2027 school year, with adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index annually.
 2. There’s no upper limit on what the salary may be.

- **(c) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT**

1. Grants must supplement rather than replace existing funding for teacher salaries.
2. States must maintain teacher pay levels and ensure compliance with funding distribution.

SECTION 4: GRANTS FOR ADJUSTMENT OF TEACHER SALARIES

- Grants to provide cost-of-living adjustments to teachers' annual salaries based on the Consumer Price Index.
- Eligible states must demonstrate a current base salary of at least \$60,000 and the inability to adjust salaries due to inflation.

SECTION 5: ENHANCED AWARENESS OF THE VALUE OF TEACHING PROFESSION

- Authorizes funds for a national campaign aimed at:
 1. Highlighting the importance of teachers.
 2. Encouraging students to pursue teaching careers.
 3. Promoting diversity within the teaching profession.

SECTION 6: RULE OF CONSTRUCTION

- Clarifies that the Act does not alter rights and procedures for school employees under existing laws or collective bargaining agreements.

SECTION 7: DEFINITIONS

- Defines key terms such as “eligible State,” “qualifying school,” “teacher,” and “teacher of record.”

SECTION 8: AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

- Authorizes necessary appropriations for fiscal years 2026 through 2030 to implement the provisions of the Act.