

Get Toxic Substances Out of Schools Act of 2024

Toxic substances are prevalent in schools across the country, particularly in high-poverty schools, and include lead, asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). A report from Senator Markey's office in 2016 showed that even though PCBs have been banned in the United States since 1979, up to 26,000 schools around the country contain these chemicals in light ballasts, caulk, and paint.

The *Get Toxic Substances Out of Schools Act of 2024* would authorize grants under Section 28 of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) for monitoring and remediation of hazardous substances in schools and childcare centers. The bill would also re-authorize and expand Title V of the TSCA, which provides technical assistance to local educational agencies and establishes coordination between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Education in addressing environmental health issues in schools. This legislation would authorize funding for Section 28 at \$52 billion over the course of 10 years, as well as for Title V (also known as the "Healthy High-Performance Schools" program) at \$100 million over the course of 10 years.

The legislation would also expand the list of environmental hazards accounted for in Title V to explicitly include polychlorinated biphenyls and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which the EPA would have to consider when developing environmental health guidelines for schools.

High-road labor standards would be built in for projects funded by the grant program, including the requirement of project labor agreements for projects over \$25 million, Davis-Bacon wage rate requirements, occupational health and safety standards, Buy American standards, and workforce development provisions.

This legislation would also increase EPA outreach to states and Tribes to provide up-to-date information on environmental hazards in school facilities, and direct EPA to convene stakeholders biannually to discuss efforts to promote and support environmental health of children at school. The EPA would also be required to develop and make public an inventory of toxic substances in schools participating in the grant program.

Finally, this legislation would authorize a new grant program for assessing, monitoring, and improving indoor air quality at schools and childcare centers, critical to reducing airborne exposure to toxic health hazards, with \$1 billion in funding over the course of 10 years.