

## LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

### S. 2401 – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Assistive Technology Act

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#### OVERVIEW

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Assistive Technology Act, S. 2401, reauthorizes the Assistive Technology Act of 2004. Introduced by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Susan Collins (R-ME), and Kevin Cramer (R-ND), this bill is designed to modernize and update the current law. Given the strong and effective changes made during the 2004 reauthorization, this reauthorization refines and strengthens the components solidified in 2004, and refrains from significant changes or inclusion of additional programs.

This summary details how the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Assistive Technology Act builds on the key reforms made in the 2004 reauthorization and builds capacity for the two programs involved: Section 4 State Assistive Technology Act Grantees and Section 5 Protection and Advocacy Systems.

#### SECTION 4 - STATE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANTEEES:

- This bill maintains ***flexibility***, a key pillar from the 2004 reauthorization, which means each State program shall determine how to spend their federal allocation to meet the State's unique needs (which are determined by an annual state-wide needs assessment).
- Another key pillar maintained in this bill is the ***continuum of integrated assistive technology services outlined in the four state-level activities – device demonstration, device loan, reutilization, state financing*** – that maximize the ability of individuals with disabilities and older Americans across the human lifespan, and across the wide array of disabilities, to increase access to and acquisition of assistive technology.
- This bill supports collaboration between Section 4 State AT Grantees and other state funding sources to maximize the availability to access and acquire assistive technology through device demonstration, loan, reuse, and state financing activities.
- The bill modifies the formula structure and raises a state's minimum allotment from \$410,000 to \$550,00 and from \$125,000 to \$167,500 for territories. Additionally, the formula changes from one that is based on population, to an equal distribution of any increase in funds above the FY2021 baseline to all states. Once states reach the minimum allotment of \$550,000, additional future increases will be distributed with 50 percent of the increase allocated equally and the other 50 percent of the increase distributed according to the 2004 formula calculations (which is based on population).

## **SECTION 5 - PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (PAAT):**

- This bill synchronizes the program income rules for the PAAT program with the Department of Health and Human Services' rules rather than the rules of the Department of Education where the program was formally located.
- This bill adds a provision to ensure that minimum allotment states see an increase in the size of their PAAT grant once the program reaches \$8,000,000 in funding.

## **SECTION 6 - TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DATA REPORTING**

- The bill revises Section 6 to establish a separate TA grant for Sections 4 and 5.

## **SECTION 7 - PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**

- Once Sections 4 and 5 reach close to full funding, then Congress can allocate funds, no more than \$2 million, for an outlined set of innovative collaborations Section 4 and 5 to pursue.

## **SECTION 8 – ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS**

- The bill includes language that outlines the clear oversight role of the Administration for Community Living for Sections 4 and 5.

## **SECTION 9 – AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS**

- The bill outlines how the federal allocation will be spent between Sections 4, 5, and 6. Two percent of funds will be split between Sections 4 and 5 to support the separate technical assistance awards. The remaining portion of federal funds will be divided between Sections 4 and 5, with Section 4 receiving 85.5 percent and Section 5 receiving 14.5 percent.

## **CO-SPONSORS**

Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)

Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH)

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME)

Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND)

## **CONCLUSION**

This bill was referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and was passed by a voice vote. ATAP will be tracking all movement of this legislation.

For more information, visit: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-117s2401rs/pdf/BILLS-117s2401rs.pdf>.