To require institutions of higher education participating in Federal student aid programs to share information about title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including a link to the webpage of the Office for Civil Rights where an individual can submit a complaint regarding discrimination in violation of such title, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Cassidy (for himself and Mr. Fetterman) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To require institutions of higher education participating in Federal student aid programs to share information about title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including a link to the webpage of the Office for Civil Rights where an individual can submit a complaint regarding discrimination in violation of such title, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Students on Campus Act of 2024”.
SEC. 2. TITLE VI AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.

(a) Title VI Awareness Campaign.—

(1) In General.—The Secretary of Education, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, shall carry out a public awareness campaign regarding the availability of rights provided to individuals under title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.).

(2) Awareness Campaign.—The public awareness campaign shall include appealing visual and auditory elements and shall be updated annually and distributed to institutions of higher education for physical posting in 1 or more high traffic public places, such as student centers, and digital posting on 1 or more high traffic institution web pages, such as student services. The campaign shall utilize such methods and materials as necessary to maximize student accessibility.

(3) Ability to Contract.—The Secretary may carry out this subsection directly or through a contract with a nonprofit organization that specializes in public awareness communications.

(b) HEA Amendments.—Section 487(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:
“(30) The institution—

“(A) has prominently displayed on the homepage of the institution a link to the webpage of the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education where an individual can submit a complaint regarding discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.); and

“(B) will annually display and post the public awareness campaign materials created and distributed under section 2(a) of the Protecting Students on Campus Act of 2024 in high traffic public places on campus, such as student centers, and high traffic institution web pages, such as student services.”.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act and ending 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education shall give a monthly briefing to Congress—

(1) explaining the number of complaints that the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education (referred to in this Act as the “Office”)
has received in the previous month regarding discrimi-
nation on the basis of race, color, or national
origin in violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act
of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), disaggregated by
the basis of discrimination;

(2) describing how the Office plans to address
those complaints and the investigations opened in re-
response to those complaints; and

(3) providing data about the length of time that
those complaints remain open after being received by
the Office.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 48 hours prior to each
briefing described in subsection (a), the Assistant Sec-
retary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education
shall provide a written report to Congress that contains
the information that will be presented at the next briefing,
in a manner that protects personally identifiable informa-
tion in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

SEC. 4. AUDIT AND STUDY.

(a) REQUIREMENT TO SUBMIT DATA.—Each institu-
tion of higher education receiving Federal funds shall sub-
mit an annual report to the Inspector General of the De-
partment of Education that includes—

(1) the number of complaints regarding discrimi-
nation on the basis of race, color, or national
origin in violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.) that were submitted to the institution in the previous year;

(2) an analysis of the number of such complaints and their substance; and

(3) a narrative of the action the institution took with respect to such complaints.

(b) Audit.—The Inspector General of the Department of Education shall complete an annual audit of the institutions of higher education that are in the top 5 percent of institutions based on the per capita number of complaints described in subsection (a) received by the institutions, controlling for student population, to examine the process for addressing such complaints and the need for any referrals to the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education.

(c) Study.—The Inspector General of the Department of Education shall conduct a study—

(1) regarding why there is a distinction between the complaints regarding discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.) that are submitted to institutions of higher education and such complaints that are submitted to the Office; and
(2) quantifying the distinction described in paragraph (1).

SEC. 5. OCR PROCESS REFORMS.

The Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Education shall not close or dismiss any complaint due to resolution by another Federal, State, or local civil rights enforcement agency or through a recipient’s internal grievance procedures.