

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2618

To rename the Office of Technology Assessment as the Congressional Office of Technology, to revise the functions and duties of the Office, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 27, 2023

Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To rename the Office of Technology Assessment as the Congressional Office of Technology, to revise the functions and duties of the Office, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Office of Technology
5 Assessment Improvement and Enhancement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. RENAMING OF OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESS-**
2 **MENT AS CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE OF TECH-**
3 **NOLOGY.**

4 (a) RENAMING.—Section 3(a) of the Technology As-
5 sessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 472(a)) is amended by
6 striking “the Office of Technology Assessment” and in-
7 serting “the Congressional Office of Technology”.

8 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5(a) of
9 such Act (2 U.S.C. 474(a)) is amended by striking “Direc-
10 tor of the Office of Technology Assessment” and inserting
11 “Director of the Congressional Office of Technology”.

12 (c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The heading of section
13 3 of such Act is amended by striking “OFFICE OF TECH-
14 NOLOGY ASSESSMENT” and inserting “CONGRESSIONAL
15 OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY”.

16 (d) REFERENCES IN LAW.—Any reference in any
17 law, rule, or regulation to the Office of Technology Assess-
18 ment shall be deemed to be a reference to the Congres-
19 sional Office of Technology.

20 **SEC. 3. REVISION OF FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF OFFICE.**

21 (a) BASIC FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES.—Section 3(c) of
22 the Technology Assessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 472(e))
23 is amended—

24 (1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by
25 inserting after the first sentence the following: “This
26 information should be provided as expeditiously, ef-

1 fectively, and efficiently as possible while maintain-
2 ing a forward-looking, holistic, and rigorous ap-
3 proach to the assessment of the impacts of tech-
4 nology.”;

5 (2) in paragraph (6), by striking “completed
6 analyses” and inserting “completed analyses, as well
7 as preliminary findings of ongoing analyses,”;

8 (3) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph
9 (7);

10 (4) by striking the period at the end of para-
11 graph (8) and inserting a semicolon; and

12 (5) by adding at the end the following new
13 paragraphs:

14 “(9) provide information to Members and com-
15 mittees of Congress in the form of briefings, infor-
16 mal conversations, documents, and similar formats
17 which may be provided expeditiously on the basis of
18 existing research and staff expertise without the
19 need for review by the Board;

20 “(10) provide technical assistance to Members
21 of Congress on legislation related to science and
22 technology which may be provided expeditiously on
23 the basis of existing research and staff expertise
24 without the need for review by the Board; and

1 “(11) when requested, provide objective policy
2 options to Members of Congress on how the Mem-
3 bers may achieve goals with respect to science and
4 technology policy.”.

5 (b) REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION OF ASSESS-
6 MENT ACTIVITIES.—Section 3(d) of such Act (2 U.S.C.
7 472(d)) is amended to read as follows:

8 “(d)(1) Assessment activities undertaken by the Of-
9 fice may be initiated upon the request of—

10 “(A) subject to paragraph (2), any Member of
11 Congress (including a Delegate or Resident Commis-
12 sioner to the Congress), any standing, special, or se-
13 lect committee of either House of Congress, or any
14 joint committee of Congress;

15 “(B) the Board; or

16 “(C) the Director, in consultation with the
17 Board.

18 “(2)(A) A Member of Congress or committee request-
19 ing that the Office undertake an assessment activity under
20 paragraph (1)(A) shall submit the request to the Board,
21 which shall review the request.

22 “(B) The Office shall determine whether or not to
23 undertake an assessment activity in response to such a
24 request in accordance with such policies and procedures
25 as the Office shall establish, under which—

1 “(i) the Office may give priority to those re-
2 quests which, in the Board’s determination, relate to
3 technology issues of the greatest relevance and im-
4 portance;

5 “(ii) to the greatest extent practicable, the Of-
6 fice shall ensure that the number of assessment ac-
7 tivities undertaken during a year in response to re-
8 quests which are submitted by members of one polit-
9 ical party is equal to the number of assessment ac-
10 tivities undertaken in response to requests which are
11 submitted by members of another political party;
12 and

13 “(iii) to the greatest extent practicable, the Of-
14 fice shall provide the Member of Congress or com-
15 mittee submitting the request with information re-
16 garding how the Office reached its determination in
17 response to the request.”.

18 (c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF FINDINGS OF COM-
19 PLETED ANALYSES.—Section 3(e) of such Act (2 U.S.C.
20 472(e)) is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph
21 (1), in the second sentence, by inserting after “may be
22 made available to the public” the following: “(and, in the
23 case of findings of completed analyses, shall be made avail-
24 able to the public)”.

1 (d) AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF TECHNICAL
2 AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ON LEAVE FROM AKA-
3 DEMIC, INDUSTRIAL, OR RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS.—Sec-
4 tion 6(f) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 475(f)) is amended by add-
5 ing at the end the following new sentence: “The Director
6 may, under the authority provided by this subsection and
7 in accordance with such policies as the Board chooses to
8 prescribe, appoint for a limited term, or on a temporary
9 basis, scientists, engineers, and other technical and profes-
10 sional personnel on leave of absence from academic, indus-
11 trial, or research institutions to work for the Office.”.

12 (e) AVOIDING UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION OF RE-
13 SEARCH ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER OFFICES.—

14 (1) CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE.—Sec-
15 tion 8 of such Act (2 U.S.C. 477) is amended by
16 adding at the end the following new subsection:

17 “(e) The Office and the Congressional Research Serv-
18 ice shall coordinate technology assessment activities to
19 avoid unnecessary duplication or overlapping of research
20 activities.”.

21 (2) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE.—
22 Section 9 of such Act (2 U.S.C. 478) is amended by
23 adding at the end the following new subsection:

24 “(e) The Office and the Government Accountability
25 Office shall coordinate technology assessment activities to

1 avoid unnecessary duplication or overlapping of research
2 activities.”.

3 **SEC. 4. TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT BOARD.**

4 (a) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF BOARD BY CON-
5 GRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP.—Section 4(a) of the Tech-
6 nology Assessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 473(a)) is
7 amended—

8 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “appointed by
9 the President pro tempore of the Senate” and in-
10 sserting “appointed jointly by the Majority Leader
11 and the Minority Leader of the Senate”; and

12 (2) in paragraph (2), by striking “appointed by
13 the Speaker of the House of Representatives” and
14 inserting “appointed jointly by the Speaker and Mi-
15 nority Leader of the House of Representatives”.

16 (b) INVITATION TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO AT-
17 TEND ANNUAL MEETING OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT
18 BOARD; ANNUAL REPORT.—Section 4 of such Act (2
19 U.S.C. 473) is amended by adding at the end the following
20 new subsections:

21 “(e) At least once during each calendar year, the
22 Board shall hold a meeting at which Members of Congress
23 may appear and present information to the Board regard-
24 ing any technology assessment activities the Members may
25 wish the Board to undertake.

1 “(f) Not later than 90 days after the end of each cal-
2 endar year, the Board shall submit to the Subcommittees
3 on the Legislative Branch of the Committees on Appro-
4 priations of the House of Representatives and the Senate
5 a report on the activities of the Office during the year,
6 and shall include in the report a description of the tech-
7 nology assessment activities undertaken by the Office dur-
8 ing the year, including the number of requests received
9 from Members and committees of Congress under section
10 3(d)(1)(A), the number and type of assessment activities
11 undertaken in response to such requests, and the current
12 status of such assessment activities.”.

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