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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. TAKANO introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

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.

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 ''Congressional Office of Technology Improvement and Enhancement Act''.

SEC. 2. RENAMING OF OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AS CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY.

(a) RENAMING.—Section 3(a) of the Technology Assessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 472(a)) is amended by striking ''the Office of Technology Assessment'' and inserting ''the Congressional Office of Technology''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5(a) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 474(a)) is amended by striking ''Director of the Office of Technology Assessment'' and inserting ''Director of the Congressional Office of Technology''.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The heading of section 3 of such Act is amended by striking ''OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT'' and inserting ''CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY''.

(d) REFERENCES IN LAW.—Any reference in any law, rule, or regulation to the Office of Technology Assessment shall be deemed to be a reference to the Congressional Office of Technology.

SEC. 3. REVISION OF FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF THE OFFICE.

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

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking the first period and all that follows and in-

serting ‘‘, in an expeditious, effective, and efficient manner that maintains a forward-looking, holistic, and rigorous approach to assessing the effects of technology. In carrying out such function, the Office shall—’’;

(2) in paragraph (6), by striking ‘‘of completed analyses’’ and inserting ‘‘, whether of a preliminary nature or otherwise, of analyses’’;

(3) by striking ‘‘and’’ at the end of paragraph (7);

(4) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (8) and inserting a semicolon; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

‘‘(9) provide to a Member or committee of Congress, on the request of such Member or committee, without requiring the approval of the Board with respect to such request, and within 14 calendar days of such request—

‘‘(A) information or technical assistance based on established Office expertise, which may be in the form of data, research, analysis, explanations, summaries, technical observations, preliminary findings, expert judgments, policy options, and other such material that the Director determines may assist the Congress in car-

rying out legislative, oversight, appropriations, or other constitutional responsibilities; or

''(B) objective policy options to achieve a goal with respect to science and technology policy; and

''(10) conduct horizon scanning to identify emerging science and technology trends of national importance, significance, or interest, and communicate findings from such scanning to Members and committees of Congress.''.

(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION OF FORMAL ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES.—Section 3(d) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 472(d)) is amended to read as follows:

''(d)(1) A formal assessment activity undertaken by the Office may be initiated upon the request of—

''(A) subject to paragraph (2), any Member of Congress (including a Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress), any committee of either House of Congress or joint committee of Congress, or the chairman or ranking minority member of such committee;

''(B) the Board; or

''(C) the Director, in consultation with the Board.

''(2)(A) A Member or committee of the Congress, or the chairman or ranking minority member of a committee of Congress, with a request for the Office to undertake a formal assessment activity under paragraph (1)(A) shall submit the request to the Board on behalf of the Office.

''(B) The Board shall review a request under subparagraph (A) and determine whether or not to undertake a formal assessment activity in response to the request, in accordance with such policies and procedures established by the Board for such purpose, such that—

''(i) the Board may give priority to a request that, in the determination of the Board, relate to a technology issue of the greatest relevance or importance;

''(ii) to the greatest extent practicable, the Office shall ensure that the number of formal assessment activities undertaken during a year in response to the requests under subparagraph (A) submitted by Members of Congress of one political party is equal to the number of formal assessment activities undertaken in response to such requests submitted by Members of Congress of another political party; and

''(iii) to the greatest extent practicable, the Board shall provide a Member or committee of the

Congress, or a chairman or ranking minority of a committee of Congress, that submits a request under subparagraph (A) with information on how the Board makes a determination in response to the request under this subparagraph.

''(C) The Director shall submit to the Board an annual written report on the distribution and completion of requests for a formal assessment activity under this paragraph based on political party or affiliation, and the Board shall make the report available to the public.''.

(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF FINDINGS OF COMPLETED ANALYSES.—Section 3(e) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 472(e)) is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1), in the second sentence, by inserting after ''may be made available to the public'' the following: ''(and, in the case of findings of completed analyses, shall be made available to the public)''.

(d) AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ON LEAVE FROM ACADEMIC, INDUSTRIAL, OR RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS.—Section 6(f) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 475(f)) is amended to read as follows:

''(f) In accordance with such policies as the Board shall prescribe:

''(1) The Director shall appoint and fix the compensation of such personnel as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, without regard to chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code.

''(2) The Director may appoint, for a term not exceeding 1 year or on a temporary basis, scientists, engineers, and other technical and professional personnel on leave of absence from academic, industrial, or research institutions to assist the personnel of the Office in carrying out the provisions of this Act.

''(3) The Director and the personnel of the Office shall take such measures necessary to prevent or mitigate conflicts of interest.''.

(e) AVOIDING UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER OFFICES.—

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

''(e) The Office and the Congressional Research Service shall coordinate research activities related to technology assessment to avoid unnecessary duplication or overlapping of such research activities.''.

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

''(e) The Office and the Government Accountability Office shall coordinate research activities related to technology assessment to avoid unnecessary duplication or overlapping of such research activities.''.

SEC. 4. TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT BOARD.

(a) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF BOARD BY CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP.—Section 4(a) of the Technology Assessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 473(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate'' and inserting ''appointed jointly by the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader of the Senate''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking ''appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives'' and inserting ''appointed jointly by the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives''.

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

''(e) At least once in each calendar year, the Board shall hold a meeting at which a Member of Congress may appear and present information to the Board related to a research activity that the Member may wish the Board to undertake.

''(f) Not later than 90 days after the end of each calendar year, the Board shall submit to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate a report on the activities of the Office in the year which shall include—

''(1) a description of the research activities undertaken by the Office during the year;

''(2) the number of requests received under section 3(d)(1)(A);

''(3) the number and type of formal assessment activities undertaken in response to the requests referred to in paragraph (2); and

''(4) the status, at the time of the submission of the report, of the formal assessment activities.''.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS OF CERTAIN TERMS.

Section 3 of the Technology Assessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 472) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(f) In this Act:

''(1) The term 'formal assessment activity'—

''(A) means a formal examination, as determined by the Director, that is undertaken by the Office concerning the effects, implications, opportunities, risks, or policy considerations associated with science, technology, or innovation; and

''(B) does not include an action to carry out established Office expertise or the provision of information, technical assistance, briefings, consultations, preliminary findings, policy options, or other assistance under section 3(c), unless the Director determines that treatment of the action or provision as a formal assessment activity is warranted.

''(2) The term 'technical assistance' includes assistance with respect to science, technology, innovation, or a related policy matter provided to a Member, committee, or office of the Congress, through written or oral communications, whether on an expedited, informal, preliminary, or confidential basis, including with respect to the following:

''(A) Analysis of legislation, legislative proposals, amendments, or policy concepts.

''(B) Explanation or evaluation of scientific or technical matters.

''(C) Assessment of the feasibility, implementation, costs, benefits, risks, or potential consequences of a policy proposal.

''(D) Review or analysis of technical claims, data, studies, models, standards, or other information.

''(E) Assistance in identifying, developing, comparing, or refining policy approaches or legislative options.

''(F) Consultation with, or briefings for, Members, committees, or congressional staff.

''(G) Such other assistance as the Director determines appropriate to carry out the purposes of this Act.

''(3) The term 'established Office expertise' means such knowledge, information, or expertise held by, or available to, the Office without the need to carry out a formal assessment activity, such as the following:

''(A) Research, analysis, information, data, or other materials previously developed, obtained, or reviewed by the Office.

''(B) The knowledge, professional judgment, technical expertise, or experience of employees, consultants, or other personnel of the Office.

''(C) Publicly available or otherwise readily available research, data, publications, reports, or other information.

''(D) Information obtained through consultation with Federal agencies, academic institutions, research organizations, private-sector entities, experts, or other relevant individuals or organizations.

''(E) Limited supplemental research or analysis that the Director determines may be undertaken without substantially delaying the provision of assistance.''.