

118H5055



(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.

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 “Congressional Office
5 of Technology 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 THE OF-**
21 **FICE.**

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

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

1 serting “, in an expeditious, effective, and efficient
2 manner that maintains a forward-looking, holistic,
3 and rigorous approach to assessing the effects of
4 technology. In carrying out such function, the Office
5 shall—”;

6 (2) in paragraph (6), by striking “of completed
7 analyses” and inserting “, whether of a preliminary
8 nature or otherwise, of analyses”;

9 (3) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph
10 (7);

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

13 (5) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(9) provide to a Member or committee of Con-
15 gress, on the request of such Member or committee,
16 without requiring the approval of the Board with re-
17 spect to such request, and within 14 calendar days
18 of such request—

19 “(A) information or technical assistance
20 based on established Office expertise, which
21 may be in the form of data, research, analysis,
22 explanations, summaries, technical observations,
23 preliminary findings, expert judgments, policy
24 options, and other such material that the Direc-
25 tor determines may assist the Congress in car-

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

3 “(B) objective policy options to achieve a
4 goal with respect to science and technology pol-
5 icy; and

6 “(10) conduct horizon scanning to identify
7 emerging science and technology trends of national
8 importance, significance, or interest, and commu-
9 nicate findings from such scanning to Members and
10 committees of Congress.”.

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

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

16 “(A) subject to paragraph (2), any Member of
17 Congress (including a Delegate or Resident Commis-
18 sioner to the Congress), any committee of either
19 House of Congress or joint committee of Congress,
20 or the chairman or ranking minority member of such
21 committee;

22 “(B) the Board; or

23 “(C) the Director, in consultation with the
24 Board.

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

6 “(B) The Board shall review a request under sub-
7 paragraph (A) and determine whether or not to undertake
8 a formal assessment activity in response to the request,
9 in accordance with such policies and procedures estab-
10 lished by the Board for such purpose, such that—

11 “(i) the Board may give priority to a request
12 that, in the determination of the Board, relate to a
13 technology issue of the greatest relevance or impor-
14 tance;

15 “(ii) to the greatest extent practicable, the Of-
16 fice shall ensure that the number of formal assess-
17 ment activities undertaken during a year in response
18 to the requests under subparagraph (A) submitted
19 by Members of Congress of one political party is
20 equal to the number of formal assessment activities
21 undertaken in response to such requests submitted
22 by Members of Congress of another political party;
23 and

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

1 Congress, or a chairman or ranking minority of a
2 committee of Congress, that submits a request under
3 subparagraph (A) with information on how the
4 Board makes a determination in response to the re-
5 quest under this subparagraph.

6 “(C) The Director shall submit to the Board an an-
7 nual written report on the distribution and completion of
8 requests for a formal assessment activity under this para-
9 graph based on political party or affiliation, and the Board
10 shall make the report available to the public.”.

11 (c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF FINDINGS OF COM-
12 PLETED ANALYSES.—Section 3(e) of such Act (2 U.S.C.
13 472(e)) is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph
14 (1), in the second sentence, by inserting after “may be
15 made available to the public” the following: “(and, in the
16 case of findings of completed analyses, shall be made avail-
17 able to the public)”.

18 (d) AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF TECHNICAL
19 AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ON LEAVE FROM ACA-
20 DEMIC, INDUSTRIAL, OR RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS.—Sec-
21 tion 6(f) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 475(f)) is amended to read
22 as follows:

23 “(f) In accordance with such policies as the Board
24 shall prescribe:

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

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

12 “(3) The Director and the personnel of the Of-
13 fice shall take such measures necessary to prevent or
14 mitigate conflicts of interest.”.

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

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

20 “(e) The Office and the Congressional Research Serv-
21 ice shall coordinate research activities related to tech-
22 nology assessment to avoid unnecessary duplication or
23 overlapping of such research activities.”.

1 (2) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE.—

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

4 “(e) The Office and the Government Accountability
5 Office shall coordinate research activities related to tech-
6 nology assessment to avoid unnecessary duplication or
7 overlapping of such research activities.”.

8 **SEC. 4. TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT BOARD.**

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

13 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “appointed by
14 the President pro tempore of the Senate” and in-
15 serting “appointed jointly by the Majority Leader
16 and the Minority Leader of the Senate”; and

17 (2) in paragraph (2), by striking “appointed by
18 the Speaker of the House of Representatives” and
19 inserting “appointed jointly by the Speaker and Mi-
20 nority Leader of the House of Representatives”.

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

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

6 “(f) Not later than 90 days after the end of each cal-
7 endar year, the Board shall submit to the Committee on
8 House Administration of the House of Representatives
9 and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the
10 Senate a report on the activities of the Office in the year
11 which shall include—

12 “(1) a description of the research activities un-
13 dertaken by the Office during the year;

14 “(2) the number of requests received under sec-
15 tion 3(d)(1)(A);

16 “(3) the number and type of formal assessment
17 activities undertaken in response to the requests re-
18 ferred to in paragraph (2); and

19 “(4) the status, at the time of the submission
20 of the report, of the formal assessment activities.”.

21 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS OF CERTAIN TERMS.**

22 Section 3 of the Technology Assessment Act of 1972
23 (2 U.S.C. 472) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
24 lowing:

25 “(f) In this Act:

1 “(1) The term ‘formal assessment activity’—

2 “(A) means a formal examination, as de-
3 termined by the Director, that is undertaken by
4 the Office concerning the effects, implications,
5 opportunities, risks, or policy considerations as-
6 sociated with science, technology, or innovation;
7 and

8 “(B) does not include an action to carry
9 out established Office expertise or the provision
10 of information, technical assistance, briefings,
11 consultations, preliminary findings, policy op-
12 tions, or other assistance under section 3(c),
13 unless the Director determines that treatment
14 of the action or provision as a formal assess-
15 ment activity is warranted.

16 “(2) The term ‘technical assistance’ includes as-
17 sistance with respect to science, technology, innova-
18 tion, or a related policy matter provided to a Mem-
19 ber, committee, or office of the Congress, through
20 written or oral communications, whether on an expe-
21 dited, informal, preliminary, or confidential basis, in-
22 cluding with respect to the following:

23 “(A) Analysis of legislation, legislative pro-
24 posals, amendments, or policy concepts.

1 “(B) Explanation or evaluation of scientific
2 or technical matters.

3 “(C) Assessment of the feasibility, imple-
4 mentation, costs, benefits, risks, or potential
5 consequences of a policy proposal.

6 “(D) Review or analysis of technical
7 claims, data, studies, models, standards, or
8 other information.

9 “(E) Assistance in identifying, developing,
10 comparing, or refining policy approaches or leg-
11 islative options.

12 “(F) Consultation with, or briefings for,
13 Members, committees, or congressional staff.

14 “(G) Such other assistance as the Director
15 determines appropriate to carry out the pur-
16 poses of this Act.

17 “(3) The term ‘established Office expertise’
18 means such knowledge, information, or expertise
19 held by, or available to, the Office without the need
20 to carry out a formal assessment activity, such as
21 the following:

22 “(A) Research, analysis, information, data,
23 or other materials previously developed, ob-
24 tained, or reviewed by the Office.

1 “(B) The knowledge, professional judgment,
2 ment, technical expertise, or experience of employees,
3 consultants, or other personnel of the
4 Office.

5 “(C) Publicly available or otherwise readily
6 available research, data, publications, reports,
7 or other information.

8 “(D) Information obtained through consultation with Federal agencies, academic institutions,
9 research organizations, private-sector
10 entities, experts, or other relevant individuals or
11 organizations.
12 organizations.

13 “(E) Limited supplemental research or
14 analysis that the Director determines may be
15 undertaken without substantially delaying the
16 provision of assistance.”.