

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1831

To establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 16, 2015

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

A BILL

To establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, 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 “Evidence-Based Policy-
5 making Commission Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.**

7 There is established in the executive branch a com-
8 mission to be known as the “Commission on Evidence-
9 Based Policymaking” (in this Act referred to as the “Com-
10 mission”).

1 SEC. 3. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.

2 (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission
3 shall be comprised of 15 members as follows:

4 (1) Three shall be appointed by the President,
5 of whom—

6 (A) 1 shall be an academic researcher,
7 data expert, or have experience in administering
8 programs;

9 (B) 1 shall have expertise in database
10 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
11 ters; and

12 (C) 1 shall be the Director of the Office of
13 Management and Budget (or the Director’s des-
14 ignee).

15 (2) Three shall be appointed by the Speaker of
16 the House of Representatives, of whom—

17 (A) 2 shall be academic researchers, data
18 experts, or have experience in administering
19 programs; and

20 (B) 1 shall have expertise in database
21 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
22 ters.

23 (3) Three shall be appointed by the Minority
24 Leader of the House of Representatives, of whom—

1 (A) 2 shall be academic researchers, data
2 experts, or have experience in administering
3 programs; and

4 (B) 1 shall have expertise in database
5 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
6 ters.

7 (4) Three shall be appointed by the Majority
8 Leader of the Senate, of whom—

9 (A) 2 shall be academic researchers, data
10 experts, or have experience in administering
11 programs; and

12 (B) 1 shall have expertise in database
13 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
14 ters.

15 (5) Three shall be appointed by the Minority
16 Leader of the Senate, of whom—

17 (A) 2 shall be academic researchers, data
18 experts, or have experience in administering
19 programs; and

20 (B) 1 shall have expertise in database
21 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
22 ters.

23 (b) EXPERTISE.—In making appointments under this
24 section, consideration should be given to individuals with

1 expertise in economics, statistics, program evaluation,
2 data security, confidentiality, or database management.

3 (c) CHAIRPERSON AND CO-CHAIRPERSON.—The
4 President shall select the chairperson of the Commission
5 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall se-
6 lect the co-chairperson.

7 (d) TIMING OF APPOINTMENTS.—Appointments to
8 the Commission shall be made not later than 45 days after
9 the date of enactment of this Act.

10 (e) TERMS; VACANCIES.—Each member shall be ap-
11 pointed for the duration of the Commission. Any vacancy
12 in the Commission shall not affect its powers, and shall
13 be filled in the manner in which the original appointment
14 was made.

15 (f) COMPENSATION.—Members of the Commission
16 shall serve without pay.

17 (g) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Com-
18 mission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per
19 diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employ-
20 ees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title
21 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or
22 regular places of business in the performance of services
23 for the Commission.

1 SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.

2 (a) STUDY OF DATA.—The Commission shall conduct
3 a comprehensive study of the data inventory, data infra-
4 structure, and statistical protocols related to Federal pol-
5 icymaking and the statistical and programmatic agencies
6 responsible for maintaining that data to—

7 (1) determine the optimal arrangement for
8 which administrative data on Federal programs and
9 tax expenditures and related data series may be in-
10 tegrated and made available to facilitate program
11 evaluation, continuous improvement, policy-relevant
12 research, and cost-benefit analyses by qualified re-
13 searchers and institutions;

14 (2) make recommendations on how data infra-
15 structure and protocols should be modified to best
16 fulfill the objectives identified in paragraph (1); and

17 (3) make recommendations on how best to in-
18 corporate outcomes measurement, institutionalize
19 randomized controlled trials, and rigorous impact
20 analysis into program design.

21 (b) CLEARINGHOUSE.—In undertaking the study re-
22 quired by subsection (a), the Commission shall consider
23 if and how to create a clearinghouse for program and sur-
24 vey data, which shall include evaluation of—

1 (1) what administrative data that are relevant
2 for program evaluation and Federal policy-making
3 should be included in a potential clearinghouse;

4 (2) which survey data the administrative data
5 identified in paragraph (1) may be linked to, in ad-
6 dition to linkages across administrative data series;

7 (3) what are the legal and administrative bar-
8 riers to including or linking these data series;

9 (4) what data-sharing infrastructure should be
10 used to facilitate data merging and access for re-
11 search purposes;

12 (5) how a clearinghouse could be self-funded;

13 (6) which types of qualified researchers, offi-
14 cials, and institutions should have access to data;

15 (7) what limitations should be placed on the use
16 of data provided;

17 (8) how to protect information and ensure indi-
18 vidual privacy and confidentiality;

19 (9) how the data and results of research can be
20 used to inform program administrators and policy-
21 makers to improve program design; and

22 (10) what incentives may facilitate interagency
23 sharing of information to improve programmatic ef-
24 fectiveness and enhance data accuracy and com-
25 prehensiveness.

1 (c) REPORT.—Upon the affirmative vote of at least
2 three-quarters of the members of the Commission, the
3 Commission shall submit to the President and Congress
4 a detailed statement of its findings and conclusions as a
5 result of the study required by subsection (a), together
6 with its recommendations for such legislation or adminis-
7 trative actions as the Commission considers appropriate
8 in light of the results of the study.

9 (d) DEADLINE.—The report under subsection (c)
10 shall be submitted not later than the date that is 15
11 months after the date a majority of the members of the
12 Commission are appointed pursuant to section 3.

13 (e) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “adminis-
14 trative data” means data—

15 (1) held by an agency or a contractor or grant-
16 ee of an agency (including a State or unit of local
17 government); and

18 (2) collected for other than statistical purposes.

19 **SEC. 5. OPERATION AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

20 (a) ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE.—The heads of
21 the following agencies shall advise and consult with the
22 Commission on matters within their respective areas of re-
23 sponsibility:

24 (1) The Bureau of the Census.

25 (2) The Internal Revenue Service.

1 (3) The Department of Health and Human
2 Services.

3 (4) The Department of Agriculture.

4 (5) The Department of Housing and Urban De-
5 velopment.

6 (6) The Social Security Administration.

7 (7) The Department of Education.

8 (8) The Department of Justice.

9 (9) The Office of Management and Budget.

10 (10) The Bureau of Economic Analysis.

11 (11) The Bureau of Labor Statistics.

12 (12) Any other agency, as determined by the
13 Commission.

14 (b) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet not
15 later than 30 days after the date upon which a majority
16 of its members have been appointed and at such times
17 thereafter as the chairperson or co-chairperson shall deter-
18 mine.

19 (c) RULES OF PROCEDURE.—The chairperson and
20 co-chairperson shall, with the approval of a majority of
21 the members of the Commission, establish written rules
22 of procedure for the Commission, which shall include a
23 quorum requirement to conduct the business of the Com-
24 mission.

1 (d) HEARINGS.—The Commission may, for the pur-
2 pose of carrying out this Act, hold hearings, sit and act
3 at times and places, take testimony, and receive evidence
4 as the Commission considers appropriate.

5 (e) CONTRACTS.—The Commission may contract
6 with and compensate government and private agencies or
7 persons for any purpose necessary to enable it to carry
8 out this Act.

9 (f) MAILS.—The Commission may use the United
10 States mails in the same manner and under the same con-
11 ditions as other agencies of the Federal Government.

12 (g) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and
13 dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

14 **SEC. 6. FUNDING.**

15 Subject to the availability of appropriations—

16 (1) at the request of the Director of the Cen-
17 sus, the agencies identified as “Principal Statistical
18 Agencies” in the report, published by the Office of
19 Management and Budget, entitled “Statistical Pro-
20 grams of the United States Government, Fiscal Year
21 2015” shall provide funds, in a total amount not to
22 exceed \$3,000,000, to the Director for purposes of
23 carrying out the activities of the Commission as pro-
24 vided in this Act; and

1 (2) the Bureau of the Census shall provide ad-
2 ministrative support to the Commission, which may
3 include providing physical space at, and access to,
4 the headquarters of the Bureau of the Census, lo-
5 cated in Suitland, Maryland.

6 **SEC. 7. PERSONNEL.**

7 (a) **DIRECTOR.**—The Commission shall have a Direc-
8 tor who shall be appointed by the chairperson with the
9 concurrence of the co-chairperson. The Director shall be
10 paid at a rate of pay established by the chairperson and
11 co-chairperson, not to exceed the annual rate of basic pay
12 payable for level V of the Executive Schedule (section
13 5316 of title 5, United States Code).

14 (b) **STAFF.**—The Director may appoint and fix the
15 pay of additional staff as the Director considers appro-
16 priate.

17 (c) **EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.**—The Commission
18 may procure temporary and intermittent services under
19 section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates
20 for individuals which do not to exceed the daily equivalent
21 of the annual rate of basic pay for a comparable position
22 paid under the General Schedule.

1 SEC. 8. TERMINATION.

2 The Commission shall terminate not later than 18
3 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

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