

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7029

To facilitate the re-opening of schools through study of children’s role in transmitting SARS–CoV–2, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 27, 2020

Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio (for himself and Ms. FUDGE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To facilitate the re-opening of schools through study of children’s role in transmitting SARS–CoV–2, 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 “Protect our Children
5 from COVID–19 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) School closures have substantial negative ef-
9 fects on children’s education, mental health, and so-
10 cial development.

1 (2) In general, school closures compound in-
2 equalities in rural and low-income communities,
3 where students often lack access to computers and
4 high-speed internet.

5 (3) Returning children to the classroom will not
6 only facilitate their development, but also free up
7 their adult caregivers as they return to work.

8 (4) To date, scientific evidence suggests chil-
9 dren have a lower probability of developing a serious
10 illness from COVID-19 than adults. It remains un-
11 clear, however, what role children play in transmit-
12 ting SARS-CoV-2.

13 (5) Pursuing research that analyzes and under-
14 stands the transmissibility of SARS-CoV-2 in chil-
15 dren will help families, educators, and elected lead-
16 ers make better decisions on re-opening schools and
17 our economy.

18 **SEC. 3. STUDY ON CHILDREN'S ROLE IN TRANSMITTING**

19 **SARS-COV-2.**

20 (a) STUDY.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than August 1,
22 2020, the Secretary of Health and Human Services
23 (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”), in
24 coordination with the heads of agencies of the De-
25 partment of Health and Human Services and ex-

1 perts from outside of the Department, as appro-
2 priate, shall complete a study on children’s role in
3 transmitting SARS–CoV–2.

4 (2) ISSUES TO BE STUDIED.—The study under
5 paragraph (1) shall address—

6 (A) the transmissibility of COVID–19 from
7 child to child, child to adult, and adult to child;

8 (B) the vulnerability of children, especially
9 those with underlying health conditions, to se-
10 vere illness as such vulnerability relates to
11 COVID–19;

12 (C) the vulnerability of adults, especially
13 those with underlying health conditions, who
14 send their children back to school; and

15 (D) the vulnerability of adults, especially
16 those with underlying health conditions, who
17 interact with children who may be asymp-
18 tomatic but infectious.

19 (3) CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out the
20 study under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

21 (A) take into consideration the best avail-
22 able science, including as provided by the Na-
23 tional Academy of Sciences; and

1 (B) ensure that such study includes con-
2 sideration of children who are members of ra-
3 cial or ethnic minority groups.

4 (b) REPORTING.—Not later than August 1, 2020,
5 and quarterly thereafter through the end of the emergency
6 period, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Congress
7 on children’s role in transmitting SARS–CoV–2. The first
8 such report shall include the results of the study under
9 subsection (a).

10 (c) DISSEMINATION OF BEST PRACTICES.—Not later
11 than August 1, 2020, and quarterly thereafter through the
12 end of the emergency period, the Secretary shall dissemi-
13 nate to stakeholders best practices for protecting children
14 and adults in educational settings. The first best practices
15 disseminated pursuant to the preceding sentence shall in-
16 clude any best practices for protecting children and adults
17 in educational settings identified through the study under
18 subsection (a).

19 (d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “emer-
20 gency period” has the meaning given to such term in sec-
21 tion 1135(g)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
22 1320b–5(g)(1)(B)).

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