

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3500

To require the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, to report the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) using methodology employed in 1980.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 11, 2015

Mr. JONES introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To require the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, to report the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W) using methodology employed in 1980.

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 “Honesty in Consumer
5 Price Index Reporting Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Beginning in 1975, Congress required So-
9 cial Security retirement benefits to automatically in-
10 crease annually in order to provide a cost-of-living

1 adjustment (COLA), based on increases in the Con-
2 sumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and
3 Clerical Workers, or CPI-W, a data set issued by
4 the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

5 (2) The Social Security Administration website
6 correctly explains that the purpose of the COLA is
7 “to ensure that the purchasing power of Social Secu-
8 rity and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) bene-
9 fits is not eroded by inflation”.

10 (3) The CPI-W data set published by the Bu-
11 reau of Labor Statistics has come under criticism, as
12 the BLS has made repeated changes in the method-
13 ology for calculation, particularly since 1980, so that
14 it no longer measures maintaining a constant stand-
15 ard of living by reflecting changes in price of a fixed
16 market basket of goods and services, but rather re-
17 flects the consumer substitution of less-expensive
18 products and services as prices rise.

19 **SEC. 3. REQUIRED REPORTING OF CERTAIN CONSUMER**
20 **PRICE INDEX DATA USING 1980 METHOD-**
21 **LOGY.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Bureau of Labor Statistics
23 shall regularly and routinely report an additional data set
24 designed to replicate the Consumer Price Index for Urban
25 Wage Earners and Clerical Workers or CPI-W set reflect-

1 ing a fixed market basket of goods and services, omitting
2 consideration of substitution of goods and services due to
3 changes in individual consumption patterns caused by
4 price increases, utilizing the methodology that was em-
5 ployed by such Bureau in 1980.

6 (b) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subsection (a) shall
7 prevent the Bureau of Labor Statistics from making
8 changes in the market basket employed in the new data
9 set required to be created under subsection (a) that are
10 necessitated by technological changes which are fully dis-
11 closed to the public prior to making such changes.

12 (c) TERMINATION.—The requirement in subsection
13 (a) shall terminate if the Bureau of Labor Statistics ends
14 its reporting of CPI-W.

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