

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5810

To establish a national, evidence-based, and comprehensive home study assessment standard for the evaluation of prospective foster parents and adoptive parents and provide funding to States to adopt this standard.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 14, 2016

Mr. HUFFMAN (for himself and Ms. BASS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To establish a national, evidence-based, and comprehensive home study assessment standard for the evaluation of prospective foster parents and adoptive parents and provide funding to States to adopt this standard.

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 “National Adoption and
5 Foster Care Home Study Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. COMMUNITY-BASED GRANTS FOR THE PREVENTION**
2 **OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.**

3 Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment
4 Act (42 U.S.C. 5116 et seq.) is amended—

5 (1) in section 201(b)—

6 (A) in paragraph (4), by striking “; and”
7 and inserting a semicolon;

8 (B) in paragraph (5), by striking the pe-
9 riod and inserting “; and”; and

10 (C) by adding at the end the following:

11 “(6) establishing a demonstration program not
12 later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of
13 this Act through which the State—

14 “(A) adopts a specific evidence-based, uni-
15 form, home study program for the evaluation of
16 prospective foster parents and adoptive parents
17 that incorporate the elements described in sec-
18 tion 207A(a) and that—

19 “(i) expedites the screening of care-
20 givers to promote more family-based care
21 over institutional care for children;

22 “(ii) provides cost savings to the
23 State’s current foster care and adoption
24 system;

1 “(iii) reduces the number of children
 2 waiting for foster care or adoptive place-
 3 ment;

4 “(iv) reduces the number of prospec-
 5 tive families waiting for foster care or
 6 adoptive placement;

7 “(v) quantifies better outcomes for
 8 children that participate;

9 “(vi) ensures ongoing training of
 10 home study certified personnel; and

11 “(vii) designates a home study auditor
 12 to ensure quality control and accuracy of
 13 information provided to placing agencies;
 14 and

15 “(B) provides data gathered through oper-
 16 ation of the program to the Secretary, as the
 17 Secretary may require for purposes of the na-
 18 tional registry under section 207A(b).”; and

19 (2) by inserting after section 207 the following:

20 **“SEC. 207A. NATIONAL HOME STUDY STANDARD DEM-**
 21 **ONSTRATION PROGRAMS; NATIONAL REG-**
 22 **ISTRY.**

23 “(a) PROGRAM ELEMENTS.—Each demonstration
 24 program established by a State in accordance with section

1 201(b)(6) shall use the home study methodology developed
2 by the Secretary that shall incorporate—

3 “(1) information gathering tools, including—

4 “(A) an initial written questionnaire that
5 is a uniform set of closed-ended questions with
6 a variety of possible answers that provides sig-
7 nificant family information;

8 “(B) a secondary in-person questionnaire
9 that is administered in a private setting, and,
10 if applicable, with both applicants present to-
11 gether; and

12 “(C) guidelines that describe standardized
13 questions that an individual serving as a ref-
14 erence for the applicant uses in writing a ref-
15 erence letter, to be sent directly to such indi-
16 vidual and not shared with the applicant, and
17 which is consistent with the questionnaires de-
18 scribed in subparagraphs (A) and (B);

19 “(2) a written guidance document to assist
20 home study practitioners in performing a psycho-
21 social evaluation of the applicant that—

22 “(A) provides instructions on how to sys-
23 tematically analyze information learned from
24 the information gathering tools described in

1 paragraph (1) in order to identify specific
2 strengths and concerns of the applicant;

3 “(B) provides sufficient information for
4 the home study practitioner to determine the
5 significance of behaviors and events in the ap-
6 plicant’s life in relation to being a successful
7 foster care or adoption provider; and

8 “(C) includes a rating system that will be
9 incorporated into the home study report de-
10 scribed in paragraph (3); and

11 “(3) a model report that may, at the discretion
12 of the Secretary, be customized by a State as nec-
13 essary to comply with State and local regulations
14 and requirements.

15 “(b) NATIONAL REGISTRY.—The Secretary shall es-
16 tablish a national registry of home study reports filed by
17 home study practitioners using the home study method-
18 ology described in subsection (a). Such registry shall be
19 accessible to State foster care and adoption agencies, or
20 a designated entity as determined by the lead agency in
21 the State to assist with the selection of prospective foster
22 parents and adoptive parents.

23 “(c) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall enter into a
24 contract with an independent entity to carry out a periodic
25 evaluation of the home study methodology established in

- 1 subsection (a) and demonstration programs established in
- 2 accordance with section 201(b)(6).”.

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