

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7117

To direct the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission to establish a task force for the purpose of studying the effects of automated accounts on social media, public discourse, and elections, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 6, 2018

Mr. DESAULNIER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To direct the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission to establish a task force for the purpose of studying the effects of automated accounts on social media, public discourse, and elections, 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 “Bots Research Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. TASK FORCE.**

6 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after
7 the date of enactment of this Act, the Chairman of the
8 Federal Trade Commission shall establish a task force to

1 carry out the study and submit a report as required under
2 section 3.

3 (b) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The task force
4 shall be comprised of the following:

5 (1) At least 1 expert representing the Govern-
6 ment.

7 (2) At least 1 expert representing academia.

8 (3) At least 1 expert representing non-profit or-
9 ganizations.

10 (4) At least 1 expert representing industry.

11 (5) Any other expert that the Chairman deter-
12 mines appropriate.

13 (c) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Chairman shall select
14 task force members to serve by virtue of their expertise
15 in automation technology.

16 (d) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENT.—Not later than
17 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chair-
18 man shall appoint the members of the task force.

19 (e) COMPENSATION.—Members of the task force shall
20 serve without pay and shall not receive travel expenses.

21 (f) TASK FORCE SUPPORT.—The Chairman shall en-
22 sure appropriate staff and officials of the Federal Trade
23 Commission are available to support any task force-related
24 work.

1 **SEC. 3. STUDY AND REPORT.**

2 (a) STUDY.—The task force established in this Act
3 shall conduct a study of the impact of automated accounts
4 on social media, public discourse, and elections. Such
5 study shall include an assessment of—

6 (1) what qualifies as a bot or automated ac-
7 count;

8 (2) the extent to which automated accounts are
9 used;

10 (3) how the automated accounts are used; and

11 (4) how to most effectively combat any use of
12 automated accounts that negatively effects social
13 media, public discourse, and elections while con-
14 tinuing to promote the protection of the First
15 Amendment on the internet.

16 (b) TASK FORCE CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out
17 the requirements of this section, the task force shall con-
18 sider, at a minimum—

19 (1) the promotion of technological innovation;

20 (2) the protection of First Amendment and
21 other constitutional rights of social media users;

22 (3) the need to improve cybersecurity to ensure
23 the integrity of elections; and

24 (4) the importance of continuously reviewing
25 relevant regulations to ensure that such regulations
26 respond effectively to changes in technology.

1 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the estab-
2 lishment of the task force, the task force shall develop and
3 submit to Congress and relevant Federal agencies the re-
4 sults and conclusions of the study conducted under sub-
5 section (a).

