

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4391

To authorize a public service announcement campaign on the efficacy of cloth face coverings in reducing the spread of COVID–19, to authorize a program to provide cloth face coverings to any individual in the United States who requests one free of charge, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 30, 2020

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To authorize a public service announcement campaign on the efficacy of cloth face coverings in reducing the spread of COVID–19, to authorize a program to provide cloth face coverings to any individual in the United States who requests one free of charge, 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 “Masks Work Act of
5 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The SARS-CoV-2 virus has killed over
2 150,000 individuals in the United States and in-
3 fected more than 4,000,000 others.

4 (2) The measures taken to contain the virus, in-
5 cluding social distancing and stay at home orders,
6 have resulted in a significant economic disruption,
7 causing tens of millions of individuals to lose jobs
8 and income.

9 (3) Scientific experts have warned of the danger
10 of a second wave of infections striking the United
11 States in fall and winter.

12 (4) Scientific experts within the United States
13 Government and elsewhere have strongly advised in-
14 dividuals to wear cloth face coverings as a means to
15 slow the spread of COVID-19 and have stated that
16 wearing cloth face coverings may reduce the spread
17 of respiratory droplets that may carry the disease.

18 (5) There is a growing body of scientific re-
19 search indicating that high levels of cloth face cov-
20 ering adoption by a population can reduce trans-
21 mission of the virus, and may prevent asymptomatic
22 or presymptomatic carriers from unknowingly infect-
23 ing others.

24 (6) One scientific model estimated that if 80
25 percent of the population adopted proper face cov-

1 ering use, transmission would be $\frac{1}{12}$ what it would
2 be in a population without wearing cloth face cov-
3 erings. Another newly released study conducted with
4 animals found that certain face coverings reduced
5 transmission of COVID–19 by 75 percent.

6 (7) Nations in Southeast Asia with high levels
7 of cloth face covering wearing have been more effec-
8 tive than others in reducing the spread of COVID–
9 19, and have experienced comparably fewer infec-
10 tions and deaths as a result.

11 (8) A recent study from the University of
12 Iowa’s College of Public Health suggests that the 15
13 States and the District of Columbia, having man-
14 dated wearing face coverings in public between April
15 8, 2020, and May 15, 2020, averted as many as
16 230,000 to 450,000 COVID–19 cases.

17 (9) Many individuals have heeded the calls of
18 public health experts to wear cloth face coverings
19 and have made major sacrifices in other aspects of
20 their life in order to control the spread of the virus.

21 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

22 It is the sense of Congress that —

23 (1) following the consensus advice of public
24 health experts to wear face coverings can meaning-
25 fully reduce transmission rates for COVID–19, re-

1 sulting in fewer deaths, fewer individuals made seri-
2 ously ill, and less economic disruption;

3 (2) individuals should wear appropriate face
4 coverings in accordance with public health guidance,
5 including in situations where social distancing is dif-
6 ficult or impossible, particularly in indoors environ-
7 ments, both to protect themselves and to protect
8 older individuals or others with health conditions
9 that increase the risks of serious illness due to
10 COVID-19; and

11 (3) leaders across the political spectrum should
12 model behaviors recommended by public health ex-
13 perts by wearing face coverings appropriately and
14 encouraging those around them to do the same.

15 **SEC. 4. PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT CAMPAIGN.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Centers for
17 Disease Control and Prevention (in this section referred
18 to as the “Director”) shall carry out a linguistically and
19 culturally competent public service announcement cam-
20 paign on television, radio, the internet, and digital plat-
21 forms, and in print publications, informing the public on—

22 (1) the efficacy of cloth face coverings; and

23 (2) why cloth face coverings are recommended
24 by public health experts to reduce the spread of
25 COVID-19.

1 (b) AUDIENCE.—In carrying out the campaign under
2 subsection (a), the Director shall ensure that public serv-
3 ice announcements reach as many individuals as possible
4 with scientifically accurate messages about cloth face cov-
5 erings.

6 (c) ACCESSIBILITY.—The Director shall ensure that
7 public service announcements are provided in formats suit-
8 able for people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind,
9 blind, and people who cannot rely on speech to be heard
10 and understood, including the following:

- 11 (1) American Sign Language.
- 12 (2) Large print.
- 13 (3) Braille.
- 14 (4) Fully accessible websites.
- 15 (5) Captioned videos.

16 (d) LANGUAGE.—The Director shall ensure that pub-
17 lic service announcements under this section are provided
18 in languages in addition to English, including—

- 19 (1) the languages recommended in the Depart-
20 ment of Homeland Security’s Language Access Plan
21 issued on October 1, 2016, and any succeeding plan;
- 22 (2) Native American languages that are official
23 State languages that have not less than 1,000
24 speakers, and any other Native American language
25 with not less than 10,000 speakers; and

1 (3) territorial languages that are official lan-
2 guages.

3 (e) ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES OR FORMATS.—The Di-
4 rector shall ensure that public service announcements
5 under this section are developed in additional languages
6 or formats as needed to meet specific State or local needs
7 as requested by a State governor or department of health.

8 (f) GRANTS AND CONTRACTS.—In carrying out the
9 campaign under subsection (a), the Director may, subject
10 to the availability of appropriations, award grants to, and
11 enter into contracts with, public and private entities (in-
12 cluding nonprofit organizations).

13 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry
14 out this section, there are authorized to be appropriated
15 such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2020 and
16 2021, to remain available until expended.

17 **SEC. 5. CLOTH FACE COVERINGS FOR ALL.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of ap-
19 propriations, the Secretary of Health and Human Services
20 (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) shall carry
21 out a program, in partnership with other Federal agencies,
22 to provide cloth face coverings to any individual in the
23 United States who requests such coverings free of charge
24 by United States mail and through other means, such as

1 distribution at COVID–19 testing sites, as determined ap-
 2 propriate by the Secretary.

3 (b) REQUESTS.—In carrying out this section, the
 4 Secretary shall establish procedures allowing individuals
 5 to request up to three cloth face coverings per person in
 6 their household through the internet, by mail, or by phone
 7 (including text messaging).

8 (c) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall consult
 9 with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and
 10 Prevention, the Director of the National Institutes of
 11 Health, and the heads of other agencies as appropriate
 12 regarding the design and selection of cloth face coverings
 13 to be provided under this section.

14 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry
 15 out this section, there are authorized to be appropriated
 16 such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2020 and
 17 2021, to remain available until expended.

18 **SEC. 6. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH ON**
 19 **CLOTH FACE COVERING EFFICACY.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National In-
 21 stitutes of Health (in this section referred to as the “Di-
 22 rector”) shall conduct or support research on the efficacy
 23 of cloth face coverings, face shields, and other facial cov-
 24 erings to reduce the spread of COVID–19.

1 (b) USE OF FUNDS.—Research under this section
2 may include—

3 (1) research on the effect of wearing cloth face
4 coverings on the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and
5 COVID-19;

6 (2) research on the situations for which cloth
7 face coverings are scientifically indicated;

8 (3) research on the most effective materials or
9 designs of cloth face coverings; and

10 (4) other topics as the Director determines ap-
11 propriate.

12 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry
13 out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated
14 \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2022,
15 to remain available until expended.

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