

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 741

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Received; read twice and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs

AN ACT

To redesignate the position of Director of the Indian Health Service within the Department of Health and Human Services as Assistant Secretary for Indian Health, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Stronger Engagement
3 for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025”.

4 **SEC. 2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDIAN HEALTH.**

5 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 601(a) of the Indian
6 Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1661(a)) is
7 amended—

8 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “tribes” and
9 inserting “Tribes”;

10 (2) in paragraph (2)—

11 (A) by striking “a Director” and inserting
12 “an Assistant Secretary for Indian Health (in
13 this section referred to as the ‘Assistant Sec-
14 retary’)”;

15 (B) by striking “The Director shall report”
16 and inserting “The Assistant Secretary shall re-
17 port directly”;

18 (C) by striking “the Director” and insert-
19 ing “the Assistant Secretary”; and

20 (D) by striking “A Director” and inserting
21 “An Assistant Secretary”;

22 (3) in paragraph (3), by striking “date of en-
23 actment of the Indian Health Care Improvement Re-
24 authorization and Extension Act of 2009 shall serve
25 as Director” and inserting “date of enactment of the

1 Stronger Engagement for Indian Health Needs Act
2 of 2025 shall serve as Assistant Secretary”;

3 (4) in paragraph (4), in the matter before sub-
4 paragraph (A), by striking “Director” and inserting
5 “Assistant Secretary”; and

6 (5) by adding at the end the following new
7 paragraph:

8 “(5) DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The As-
9 sistant Secretary may—

10 “(A) with the approval of the Secretary,
11 appoint a Deputy Assistant Secretary; and

12 “(B) consistent with applicable law, utilize
13 officers and employees of the Department as
14 necessary to administer the activities of the
15 Service.”.

16 (b) DUTIES.—Section 601(c) of the Indian Health
17 Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1661(c)) is amended—

18 (1) in the matter before paragraph (1), by
19 striking “Director” and inserting “Assistant Sec-
20 retary”; and

21 (2) in paragraph (1), by striking “date of en-
22 actment of the Indian Health Care Improvement Re-
23 authorization and Extension Act of 2009” and in-
24 serting “date of enactment of the Stronger Engage-
25 ment for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025”.

1 (c) AUTHORITY.—Section 601(d)(1) of the Indian
2 Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1661(d)(1)) is
3 amended in the matter before subparagraph (A), by strik-
4 ing “Director” and inserting “Assistant Secretary”.

5 (d) REFERENCES.—Section 601 of the Indian Health
6 Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1661) is amended by
7 adding at the end the following new subsection:

8 “(e) REFERENCES.—Any reference to the Director of
9 the Indian Health Service in any Federal law, Executive
10 order, rule, regulation, or delegation of authority, or in
11 any document of or relating to the Director of the Indian
12 Health Service, shall be deemed to refer to the Assistant
13 Secretary.”.

14 (e) RATE OF BASIC PAY.—

15 (1) POSITIONS AT LEVEL IV.—Section 5315 of
16 title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking
17 “Assistant Secretaries of Health and Human Serv-
18 ices (6)” and inserting “Assistant Secretaries of
19 Health and Human Services (7)”.

20 (2) POSITIONS AT LEVEL V.—Section 5316 of
21 title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking

1 “Director, Indian Health Service, Department of
2 Health and Human Services.”.

Passed the House of Representatives September 14,
2026.

Attest: KEVIN F. MCCUMBER,
Clerk.