

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1151

To amend part A of title IV of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct research on indicators of child well-being.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 21, 2009

Mr. REID (for Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself and Ms. SNOWE)) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To amend part A of title IV of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct research on indicators of child well-being.

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 “State Child Well-Being
5 Research Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The well-being of children is a paramount
9 concern for our Nation and for every State, and

1 most programs for children and families are man-
2 aged at the State or local level.

3 (2) Child well-being varies over time and across
4 social, economic, and geographic groups, and can be
5 affected by changes in the circumstances of families,
6 by the economy, by the social and cultural environ-
7 ment, and by public policies and programs at the
8 Federal, State, and local level.

9 (3) States, including small States, need infor-
10 mation about child well-being that is specific to their
11 State and that is up-to-date, cost-effective, and con-
12 sistent across States and over time.

13 (4) Regular collection of child well-being infor-
14 mation at the State level is essential so that Federal
15 and State officials can track child well-being over
16 time.

17 (5) Information on child well-being is necessary
18 for all States, particularly small States that do not
19 have State-level data in other federally supported
20 databases. Information is needed on the well-being
21 of all children, not just children participating in
22 Federal programs.

23 (6) Telephone surveys of parents represent a
24 relatively cost-effective strategy for obtaining infor-
25 mation on child well-being at the State level for all

1 States, including small States, and can be conducted
2 alone or in mixed mode strategy with other survey
3 techniques.

4 (7) Data from telephone surveys of the popu-
5 lation are currently used to monitor progress toward
6 many important national goals, including immuniza-
7 tion of preschool children with the National Immuni-
8 zation Survey, and the identification of health care
9 issues of children with special needs with the Na-
10 tional Survey of Children with Special Health Care
11 Needs.

12 (8) A State-level telephone survey, alone or in
13 combination with other techniques, can provide in-
14 formation on a range of topics, including children's
15 social and emotional development, education, health,
16 safety, family income, family employment, and child
17 care. Information addressing marriage and family
18 structure can also be obtained for families with chil-
19 dren. Information obtained from such a survey
20 would not be available solely for children or families
21 participating in programs but would be representa-
22 tive of the entire State population and consequently,
23 would inform welfare policymaking on a range of im-
24 portant issues, such as income support, child care,

1 child abuse and neglect, child health, family forma-
2 tion, and education.

3 **SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON INDICATORS OF CHILD WELL-BEING.**

4 Section 413 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
5 613) is amended by adding at the end the following:

6 “(k) INDICATORS OF CHILD WELL-BEING.—

7 “(1) RENAMING OF SURVEY.—On and after the
8 date of the enactment of this subsection, the Na-
9 tional Survey of Children’s Health conducted by the
10 Director of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau
11 of the Health Resources and Services Administration
12 shall be known as the ‘Survey of Children’s Health
13 and Well-Being’.

14 “(2) MODIFICATION OF SURVEY TO INCLUDE
15 MATTERS RELATING TO CHILD WELL-BEING.—The
16 Secretary shall modify the survey so that it may be
17 used to better assess child well-being, as follows:

18 “(A) NEW INDICATORS INCLUDED.—The
19 indicators with respect to which the survey col-
20 lects information shall include measures of
21 child-well-being related to the following:

22 “(i) Education.

23 “(ii) Social and emotional develop-
24 ment.

1 “(iii) Physical and mental health and
2 safety.

3 “(iv) Family well-being, such as fam-
4 ily structure, income, employment, child
5 care arrangements, and family relation-
6 ships.

7 “(B) COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS.—The
8 data collected with respect to the indicators de-
9 veloped under subparagraph (A) shall be—

10 “(i) statistically representative at the
11 State and national level;

12 “(ii) consistent across States, except
13 that data shall be collected in States other
14 than the 50 States and the District of Co-
15 lumbia only if technically feasible;

16 “(iii) collected on an annual or ongo-
17 ing basis;

18 “(iv) measured with reliability;

19 “(v) current;

20 “(vi) over-sampled (if feasible), with
21 respect to low-income children and fami-
22 lies, so that subgroup estimates can be
23 produced by a variety of income categories
24 (such as for 50, 100, and 200 percent of
25 the poverty level, and for children of varied

1 ages, such as 0–5, 6–11, 12–17, and (if
2 feasible) 18–21 years of age); and

3 “(vii) made publicly available.

4 “(C) OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—

5 “(i) PUBLICATION.—The data col-
6 lected with respect to the indicators devel-
7 oped under subparagraph (A) shall be pub-
8 lished as absolute numbers and expressed
9 in terms of rates or percentages.

10 “(ii) AVAILABILITY OF DATA.—A data
11 file shall be made available to the public,
12 subject to confidentiality requirements,
13 that includes the indicators, demographic
14 information, and ratios of income to pov-
15 erty.

16 “(iii) SAMPLE SIZES.—Sample sizes
17 used for the collected data shall be ade-
18 quate for microdata on the categories in-
19 cluded in subparagraph (B)(vi) to be made
20 publicly available, subject to confidentiality
21 requirements.

22 “(D) CONSULTATION.—

23 “(i) IN GENERAL.—In developing the
24 indicators under subparagraph (A) and the
25 means to collect the data required with re-

1 spect to the indicators, the Secretary shall
2 consult and collaborate with a sub-
3 committee of the Federal Interagency
4 Forum on Child and Family Statistics,
5 which shall include representatives with ex-
6 pertise on all the domains of child well-
7 being described in subparagraph (A). The
8 subcommittee shall have appropriate staff
9 assigned to work with the Maternal and
10 Child Health Bureau during the design
11 phase of the survey.

12 “(ii) DUTIES.—The Secretary shall
13 consult with the subcommittee referred to
14 in clause (i) with respect to the design,
15 content, and methodology for the develop-
16 ment of the indicators under subparagraph
17 (A) and the collection of data regarding
18 the indicators, and the availability or lack
19 thereof of similar data through other Fed-
20 eral data collection efforts.

21 “(iii) COSTS.—Costs incurred by the
22 subcommittee with respect to the develop-
23 ment of the indicators and the collection of
24 data related to the indicators shall be
25 treated as costs of the survey.

1 “(3) ADVISORY PANEL.—

2 “(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary, in
3 consultation with the Federal Interagency
4 Forum on Child and Family Statistics, shall es-
5 tablish an advisory panel of experts to make
6 recommendations regarding—

7 “(i) the additional matters to be ad-
8 dressed by the survey by reason of this
9 subsection; and

10 “(ii) the methods, dissemination strat-
11 egies, and statistical tools necessary to
12 conduct the survey as a whole.

13 “(B) MEMBERSHIP.—

14 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The advisory
15 panel established under subparagraph (A)
16 of this paragraph shall include experts on
17 each of the domains of child well-being de-
18 scribed in paragraph (2)(A), experts on
19 child indicators, experts from State agen-
20 cies and from nonprofit organizations that
21 use child indicator data at the State level,
22 and experts on survey methodology.

23 “(ii) DEADLINE.—The members of
24 the advisory panel shall be appointed not

1 later than 2 months after the date of the
2 enactment of this subsection.

3 “(C) MEETINGS.—The advisory panel es-
4 tablished under subparagraph (A) shall meet—

5 “(i) at least 3 times during the first
6 year after the date of enactment of this
7 subsection; and

8 “(ii) annually thereafter for the 4 suc-
9 ceeding years.

10 “(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

11 There are authorized to be appropriated for each of
12 fiscal years 2010 through 2014, \$20,000,000 for the
13 purpose of carrying out this subsection.”.

14 **SEC. 4. GAO REPORT ON COLLECTION AND REPORTING OF**
15 **DATA ON DEATHS OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER**
16 **CARE.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Within 1 year after the date of
18 the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the
19 United States shall conduct a study to determine, and sub-
20 mit to the Congress a written report on the adequacy of,
21 the methods of collecting and reporting data on deaths of
22 children in the child welfare system.

23 (b) MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED.—In the study,
24 the Comptroller General shall, for each year for which
25 data are available, determine—

1 (1) the number of children eligible for services
2 or benefits under part B or E of title IV of the So-
3 cial Security Act who States reported as having died
4 due to abuse or neglect;

5 (2) the number of children so eligible who died
6 due to abuse or neglect but were not accounted for
7 in State reports; and

8 (3) the number of children in State child wel-
9 fare systems who died due to abuse or neglect and
10 whose deaths are not included in the data described
11 in paragraph (1) or (2).

12 (c) RECOMMENDATIONS.—In the report, the Comp-
13 troller General shall include recommendations on how sur-
14 veys of children by the Federal Government and by State
15 governments can be improved to better capture all data
16 on the death of children in the child welfare system, so
17 that the Congress can work with the States to develop bet-
18 ter policies to improve the well-being of children and re-
19 duce child deaths.

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