

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 1831, With an Amendment

(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1831

To establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 16, 2015

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

JULY 16, 2015

Additional sponsor: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana

A BILL

To establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, 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 “Evidence-Based Policy-
5 making Commission Act of 2015”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.**

2 There is established in the executive branch a com-
3 mission to be known as the “Commission on Evidence-
4 Based Policymaking” (in this Act referred to as the “Com-
5 mission”).

6 **SEC. 3. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

7 (a) **NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.**—The Commission
8 shall be comprised of 15 members as follows:

9 (1) Three shall be appointed by the President,
10 of whom—

11 (A) one shall be an academic researcher,
12 data expert, or have experience in administering
13 programs;

14 (B) one shall have expertise in database
15 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
16 ters; and

17 (C) one shall be the Director of the Office
18 of Management and Budget (or the Director’s
19 designee).

20 (2) Three shall be appointed by the Speaker of
21 the House of Representatives, of whom—

22 (A) two shall be academic researchers,
23 data experts, or have experience in admin-
24 istering programs; and

1 (B) one shall have expertise in database
2 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
3 ters.

4 (3) Three shall be appointed by the Minority
5 Leader of the House of Representatives, of whom—

6 (A) two shall be academic researchers,
7 data experts, or have experience in admin-
8 istering programs; and

9 (B) one shall have expertise in database
10 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
11 ters.

12 (4) Three shall be appointed by the Majority
13 Leader of the Senate, of whom—

14 (A) two shall be academic researchers,
15 data experts, or have experience in admin-
16 istering programs; and

17 (B) one shall have expertise in database
18 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
19 ters.

20 (5) Three shall be appointed by the Minority
21 Leader of the Senate, of whom—

22 (A) two shall be academic researchers,
23 data experts, or have experience in admin-
24 istering programs; and

1 (B) one shall have expertise in database
2 management, confidentiality, and privacy mat-
3 ters.

4 (b) EXPERTISE.—In making appointments under this
5 section, consideration should be given to individuals with
6 expertise in economics, statistics, program evaluation,
7 data security, confidentiality, or database management.

8 (c) CHAIRPERSON AND CO-CHAIRPERSON.—The
9 President shall select the chairperson of the Commission
10 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives shall se-
11 lect the co-chairperson.

12 (d) TIMING OF APPOINTMENTS.—Appointments to
13 the Commission shall be made not later than 45 days after
14 the date of enactment of this Act.

15 (e) TERMS; VACANCIES.—Each member shall be ap-
16 pointed for the duration of the Commission. Any vacancy
17 in the Commission shall not affect its powers, and shall
18 be filled in the manner in which the original appointment
19 was made.

20 (f) COMPENSATION.—Members of the Commission
21 shall serve without pay.

22 (g) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Com-
23 mission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per
24 diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employ-
25 ees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title

1 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or
2 regular places of business in the performance of services
3 for the Commission.

4 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.**

5 (a) STUDY OF DATA.—The Commission shall conduct
6 a comprehensive study of the data inventory, data infra-
7 structure, and statistical protocols related to Federal pol-
8 icymaking and the agencies responsible for maintaining
9 that data to—

10 (1) determine the optimal arrangement for
11 which administrative data on Federal programs and
12 tax expenditures, survey data, and related statistical
13 data series may be integrated and made available to
14 facilitate program evaluation, continuous improve-
15 ment, policy-relevant research, and cost-benefit anal-
16 yses by qualified researchers and institutions;

17 (2) make recommendations on how data infra-
18 structure and statistical protocols should be modified
19 to best fulfill the objectives identified in paragraph
20 (1); and

21 (3) make recommendations on how best to in-
22 corporate outcomes measurement, institutionalize
23 randomized controlled trials, and rigorous impact
24 analysis into program design.

1 (b) CLEARINGHOUSE.—In undertaking the study re-
2 quired by subsection (a), the Commission shall consider
3 whether a clearinghouse for program and survey data
4 should be established and how to create such a clearing-
5 house. The Commission shall evaluate—

6 (1) what administrative data and survey data
7 are relevant for program evaluation and Federal pol-
8 icy-making and should be included in a potential
9 clearinghouse;

10 (2) which survey data the administrative data
11 identified in paragraph (1) may be linked to, in ad-
12 dition to linkages across administrative data series;

13 (3) what are the legal and administrative bar-
14 riers to including or linking these data series;

15 (4) what data-sharing infrastructure should be
16 used to facilitate data merging and access for re-
17 search purposes;

18 (5) how a clearinghouse could be self-funded;

19 (6) which types of researchers, officials, and in-
20 stitutions should have access to data and what their
21 qualifications should be;

22 (7) what limitations should be placed on the use
23 of data provided;

24 (8) how to protect information and ensure indi-
25 vidual privacy and confidentiality;

1 (9) how data and results of research can be
2 used to inform program administrators and policy-
3 makers to improve program design; and

4 (10) what incentives may facilitate interagency
5 sharing of information to improve programmatic ef-
6 fectiveness and enhance data accuracy and com-
7 prehensiveness.

8 (c) REPORT.—Upon the affirmative vote of at least
9 three-quarters of the members of the Commission, the
10 Commission shall submit to the President and Congress
11 a detailed statement of its findings and conclusions as a
12 result of the activities required by subsections (a) and (b),
13 together with its recommendations for such legislation or
14 administrative actions as the Commission considers appro-
15 priate in light of the results of the study.

16 (d) DEADLINE.—The report under subsection (c)
17 shall be submitted not later than the date that is 15
18 months after the date a majority of the members of the
19 Commission are appointed pursuant to section 3.

20 (e) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “adminis-
21 trative data” means data—

22 (1) held by an agency or a contractor or grant-
23 ee of an agency (including a State or unit of local
24 government); and

25 (2) collected for other than statistical purposes.

1 **SEC. 5. OPERATION AND POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.**

2 (a) EXECUTIVE BRANCH ASSISTANCE.—The heads of
3 the following agencies shall advise and consult with the
4 Commission on matters within their respective areas of re-
5 sponsibility:

6 (1) The Bureau of the Census.

7 (2) The Internal Revenue Service.

8 (3) The Department of Health and Human
9 Services.

10 (4) The Department of Agriculture.

11 (5) The Department of Housing and Urban De-
12 velopment.

13 (6) The Social Security Administration.

14 (7) The Department of Education.

15 (8) The Department of Justice.

16 (9) The Office of Management and Budget.

17 (10) The Bureau of Economic Analysis.

18 (11) The Bureau of Labor Statistics.

19 (12) Any other agency, as determined by the
20 Commission.

21 (b) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet not
22 later than 30 days after the date upon which a majority
23 of its members have been appointed and at such times
24 thereafter as the chairperson or co-chairperson shall deter-
25 mine.

1 (c) RULES OF PROCEDURE.—The chairperson and
2 co-chairperson shall, with the approval of a majority of
3 the members of the Commission, establish written rules
4 of procedure for the Commission, which shall include a
5 quorum requirement to conduct the business of the Com-
6 mission.

7 (d) HEARINGS.—The Commission may, for the pur-
8 pose of carrying out this Act, hold hearings, sit and act
9 at times and places, take testimony, and receive evidence
10 as the Commission considers appropriate.

11 (e) CONTRACTS.—The Commission may contract
12 with and compensate government and private agencies or
13 persons for any purpose necessary to enable it to carry
14 out this Act.

15 (f) MAILS.—The Commission may use the United
16 States mails in the same manner and under the same con-
17 ditions as other agencies of the Federal Government.

18 (g) GIFTS.—The Commission may accept, use, and
19 dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

20 **SEC. 6. FUNDING.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b) and the
22 availability of appropriations—

23 (1) at the request of the Director of the Cen-
24 sus, the agencies identified as “Principal Statistical
25 Agencies” in the report, published by the Office of

1 Management and Budget, entitled “Statistical Pro-
2 grams of the United States Government, Fiscal Year
3 2015” shall transfer funds, as specified in advance
4 in appropriations Acts and in a total amount not to
5 exceed \$3,000,000, to the Bureau of the Census for
6 purposes of carrying out the activities of the Com-
7 mission as provided in this Act; and

8 (2) the Bureau of the Census shall provide ad-
9 ministrative support to the Commission, which may
10 include providing physical space at, and access to,
11 the headquarters of the Bureau of the Census, lo-
12 cated in Suitland, Maryland.

13 (b) PROHIBITION ON NEW FUNDING.—No additional
14 funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this
15 Act. This Act shall be carried out using amounts otherwise
16 available for the Bureau of the Census or the agencies de-
17 scribed in subsection (a)(1).

18 **SEC. 7. PERSONNEL.**

19 (a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission shall have a Direc-
20 tor who shall be appointed by the chairperson with the
21 concurrence of the co-chairperson. The Director shall be
22 paid at a rate of pay established by the chairperson and
23 co-chairperson, not to exceed the annual rate of basic pay
24 payable for level V of the Executive Schedule (section
25 5316 of title 5, United States Code).

1 (b) STAFF.—The Director may appoint and fix the
2 pay of additional staff as the Director considers appro-
3 priate.

4 (c) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Commission
5 may procure temporary and intermittent services under
6 section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates
7 for individuals which do not to exceed the daily equivalent
8 of the annual rate of basic pay for a comparable position
9 paid under the General Schedule.

10 **SEC. 8. TERMINATION.**

11 The Commission shall terminate not later than 18
12 months after the date of enactment of this Act.