

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 971

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize a program on children and the media within the National Institute of Health to study the health and developmental effects of technology on infants, children, and adolescents.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 25, 2021

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SASSE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. BENNET) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize a program on children and the media within the National Institute of Health to study the health and developmental effects of technology on infants, children, and adolescents.

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 “Children and Media
5 Research Advancement Act” or the “CAMRA Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. RESEARCH ON THE HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT**
2 **EFFECTS OF MEDIA ON INFANTS, CHILDREN,**
3 **AND ADOLESCENTS.**

4 Subpart 7 of part C of title IV of the Public Health
5 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 285g et seq.) is amended by adding
6 at the end the following:

7 **“SEC. 452H. RESEARCH ON THE HEALTH AND DEVELOP-**
8 **MENT EFFECTS OF MEDIA ON INFANTS, CHIL-**
9 **DREN, AND ADOLESCENTS.**

10 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National In-
11 stitutes of Health, in coordination with or acting through
12 the Director of the Institute, shall conduct and support
13 research and related activities concerning the health and
14 developmental effects of media on infants, children, and
15 adolescents, which may include the positive and negative
16 effects of exposure to and use of media, such as social
17 media, applications, websites, television, motion pictures,
18 artificial intelligence, mobile devices, computers, video
19 games, virtual and augmented reality, and other media
20 formats as they become available. Such research shall at-
21 tempt to better understand the relationships between
22 media and technology use and individual differences and
23 characteristics of children and shall include longitudinally
24 designed studies to assess the impact of media on youth
25 over time. Such research shall include consideration of

1 core areas of child and adolescent health and development
 2 including the following:

3 “(1) COGNITIVE.—The role and impact of
 4 media use and exposure in the development of chil-
 5 dren and adolescents within such cognitive areas as
 6 language development, executive functioning, atten-
 7 tion, creative problem solving skills, visual and spa-
 8 tial skills, literacy, critical thinking, and other learn-
 9 ing abilities, and the impact of early technology use
 10 on developmental trajectories.

11 “(2) PHYSICAL.—The role and impact of media
 12 use and exposure on children’s and adolescent’s
 13 physical development and health behaviors, including
 14 diet, exercise, sleeping and eating routines, and
 15 other areas of physical development.

16 “(3) SOCIO-EMOTIONAL.—The role and impact
 17 of media use and exposure on children’s and adoles-
 18 cents’ social-emotional competencies, including self-
 19 awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relation-
 20 ship skills, empathy, distress tolerance, perception of
 21 social cues, awareness of one’s relationship with the
 22 media, and decision-making, as well as outcomes
 23 such as violations of privacy, perpetration of or ex-
 24 posure to violence, bullying or other forms of aggres-
 25 sion, depression, anxiety, substance use, misuse or

1 disorder, and suicidal ideation/behavior and self-
2 harm.

3 “(b) DEVELOPING RESEARCH AGENDA.—The Direc-
4 tor of the National Institutes of Health, in consultation
5 with the Director of the Institute, other appropriate na-
6 tional research institutes, academies, and centers, the
7 Trans-NIH Pediatric Research Consortium, and non-Fed-
8 eral experts as needed, shall develop a research agenda
9 on the health and developmental effects of media on in-
10 fants, children, and adolescents to inform research activi-
11 ties under subsection (a). In developing such research
12 agenda, the Director may use whatever means necessary
13 (such as scientific workshops and literature reviews) to as-
14 sess current knowledge and research gaps in this area.

15 “(c) RESEARCH PROGRAM.—In coordination with the
16 Institute and other national research institutes and cen-
17 ters, and utilizing the National Institutes of Health’s proc-
18 ess of scientific peer review, the Director of the National
19 Institutes of Health shall fund an expanded research pro-
20 gram on the health and developmental effects of media
21 on infants, children, and adolescents.

22 “(d) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year
23 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of
24 the National Institutes of Health shall submit a report to
25 Congress on the progress made in gathering data and ex-

1 panding research on the health and developmental effects
2 of media on infants, children, and adolescents in accord-
3 ance with this section. Such report shall summarize the
4 grants and research funded, by year, under this section.

5 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
6 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-
7 tion—

8 “(1) \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022
9 through 2024; and

10 “(2) \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025
11 and 2026.”.

○