

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 8444

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Medicine under which the National Academy agrees to conduct a one-year study assessing the effectiveness of current vital statistics reporting and data sharing between State, local, and Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

Mr. TAYLOR (for himself and Ms. SHALALA) introduced the following bill;  
which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Medicine under which the National Academy agrees to conduct a one-year study assessing the effectiveness of current vital statistics reporting and data sharing between State, local, and Federal agencies, 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; FINDINGS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Vital Standardization of Thoughtful Administrative

1 Techniques and Statistics Act of 2020” or the “Vital  
2 STATS Act of 2020”.

3 (b) FINDINGS.—The Congress makes the following  
4 findings:

5 (1) Pandemic and highly infectious diseases  
6 have the ability to rapidly cross international and  
7 State boundaries, can infect millions of individuals  
8 in the United States, and have the potential to se-  
9 verely disrupt interstate commerce.

10 (2) During the outbreak of COVID–19, the dis-  
11 ease substantially affected interstate commerce and  
12 touched all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the  
13 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States  
14 Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the  
15 Northern Mariana Islands.

16 (3) The COVID–19 pandemic in the United  
17 States highlights the necessity of accurate and time-  
18 ly vital statistics and death reporting for a success-  
19 ful public health response.

20 (4) Variations between means and methods of  
21 vital statistics reporting between State, local, and  
22 Federal entities can create administrative hurdles,  
23 including potential backlogs, and could hamper pub-  
24 lic health response efforts.

1           (5) In order for the Nation to combat future  
2 health emergencies, to improve our general under-  
3 standing of health problems in the United States,  
4 and to ensure the sharing of timely, accurate health  
5 information, the Federal Government, State govern-  
6 ments, and local units of government must improve  
7 their means of coordinating and sharing health in-  
8 formation and vital statistics.

9 **SEC. 2. STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF VITAL STATISTICS**  
10 **REPORTING.**

11       (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and  
12 Human Services shall enter into an agreement with the  
13 National Academy of Medicine under which the National  
14 Academy agrees to conduct a one-year study assessing the  
15 effectiveness of current vital statistics reporting and data  
16 sharing between State, local, and Federal agencies and the  
17 degree to which there is divergence between State, local,  
18 and Federal vital statistics reporting.

19       (b) REPORT.—The agreement entered into under  
20 subsection (a) shall require the National Academy of Med-  
21 icine to, not later 1 year after the date on which the agree-  
22 ment is entered into, to submit to Congress a report con-  
23 taining the findings of the study conducted pursuant to  
24 such subsection. Such report shall include recommenda-  
25 tions with respect to—

- 1           (1) coordination and standardization of State,  
2           local, and Federal vital statistics reporting methods,  
3           including the efficiency, effectiveness, and trans-  
4           parency of such reporting; and
- 5           (2) the feasibility of setting national standards  
6           for death reporting and collecting vital statistics.

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