

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 3260

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a working group to formulate recommendations for standardizing the measurements of loneliness and isolation, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Mr. RICKETTS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a working group to formulate recommendations for standardizing the measurements of loneliness and isolation, 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 “Improving Measure-
5 ments for Loneliness and Isolation Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. WORKING GROUP ON UNIFYING LONELINESS RE-**
7 **SEARCH.**

8 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

1 (1) The term “isolation” means the objective
2 lack of social relationships or limited social contact
3 with others.

4 (2) The term “loneliness” means a subjective
5 feeling of being isolated.

6 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Health and
7 Human Services (in this section referred to as the “Sec-
8 retary”) shall establish a national working group, to be
9 known as the Working Group on Unifying Loneliness Re-
10 search (in this section referred to as the “Working
11 Group”), to formulate recommendations for standardizing
12 the measurements of loneliness and isolation.

13 (c) GOALS.—The goals of the recommendations
14 under subsection (b) shall be the following:

15 (1) Collaboration, cooperation, and consultation
16 among Federal departments and agencies with re-
17 spect to developing standardized measurements of
18 loneliness and isolation for the purposes of—

19 (A) having standardized measurements for
20 use in public and private research, including
21 surveys across varying populations, with the
22 ability to capture the level of granularity needed
23 to guide strategic decisionmaking, planning,
24 and evaluation of strategies to combat loneli-
25 ness and isolation; and

1 (B) providing reliable, consistent measure-
2 ment tools for use across fields and industries
3 in health care.

4 (2) Collaboration, cooperation, and consultation
5 among Federal departments and agencies with re-
6 spect to developing standardized definitions of loneli-
7 ness, isolation, and relevant terms associated with
8 loneliness and isolation for the purposes of edu-
9 cation, awareness, and understanding of the terms
10 for the general public.

11 (3) Assessment of the alignment of previous
12 methods of measuring loneliness and isolation in the
13 public and private sectors.

14 (d) COMPOSITION.—The Working Group shall be
15 composed of—

16 (1) senior-level representatives of—

17 (A) the Department of Health and Human
18 Services;

19 (B) the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid
20 Services;

21 (C) the Centers for Disease Control and
22 Prevention;

23 (D) the Administration for Community
24 Living;

25 (E) the National Institutes of Health;

1 (F) the Substance Abuse and Mental
2 Health Services Administration;

3 (G) the Health Resources and Services Ad-
4 ministration;

5 (H) the Agency for Healthcare Research
6 and Quality; and

7 (I) other agencies, groups, subject matter
8 experts, or researchers the Secretary deems
9 beneficial to be represented in the Working
10 Group consistent with the goals specified in
11 subsection (c);

12 (2) 1 representative of each of the three States
13 with the highest numbers of practitioners needed to
14 remove the designations of all mental health care
15 health professional shortage areas in the respective
16 State (as reflected in the report of the Health Re-
17 sources and Services Administration titled “Des-
18 ignated Health Professional Shortage Areas Statis-
19 tics” (June 30, 2023), with each such representative
20 designated by the Governor of the respective State;
21 and

22 (3) 1 representative of the each of the three
23 States with the lowest numbers of practitioners
24 needed to remove such designations, with each such

1 representative designated by the Governor of the re-
2 spective State.

3 (e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
5 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Working
6 Group shall—

7 (A) submit to the committees listed in
8 paragraph (3) a report describing the work and
9 recommendations of the Working Group; and

10 (B) make such report publicly available on
11 the internet.

12 (2) MEETINGS.—The Working Group shall
13 meet not less than 3 times in the course of devel-
14 oping its report.

15 (3) COMMITTEES.—The committees referred to
16 in paragraph (1)(A) are the following:

17 (A) The Committee on Education and the
18 Workforce of the House of Representatives.

19 (B) The Committee on Energy and Com-
20 merce of the House of Representatives.

21 (C) The Committee on Ways and Means of
22 the House of Representatives.

23 (D) The Committee on Finance of the Sen-
24 ate.

1 (E) The Committee on Health, Education,
2 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

3 (f) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “State”
4 means the 50 States.

5 (g) SUNSET.—This section shall cease to be effective
6 at the end of calendar year 2026.

○