

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4426

To rename the Office of Technology Assessment as the Congressional Office of Technology, to revise the functions and duties of the Office, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

Mr. TAKANO (for himself and Mr. FOSTER) introduced the following bill;  
which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

---

## A BILL

To rename the Office of Technology Assessment as the Congressional Office of Technology, to revise the functions and duties of the Office, 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 “Office of Technology  
5 Assessment Improvement and Enhancement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. RENAMING OF OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESS-**  
2 **MENT AS CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE OF TECH-**  
3 **NOLOGY.**

4 (a) RENAMING.—Section 3(a) of the Technology As-  
5 sessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 472(a)) is amended by  
6 striking “the Office of Technology Assessment” and in-  
7 serting “the Congressional Office of Technology”.

8 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5(b) of  
9 such Act (2 U.S.C. 474(b)) is amended by striking “Direc-  
10 tor of the Office of Technology Assessment” and inserting  
11 “Director of the Congressional Office of Technology”.

12 (c) REFERENCES IN LAW.—Any reference in any law,  
13 rule, or regulation to the Office of Technology Assessment  
14 shall be deemed to be a reference to the Congressional Of-  
15 fice of Technology.

16 **SEC. 3. REVISION OF FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES OF OFFICE.**

17 (a) BASIC FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES.—Section 3(c) of  
18 the Technology Assessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 472(c))  
19 is amended—

20 (1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by  
21 inserting after the first sentence the following: “This  
22 information should be provided as expeditiously, ef-  
23 fectively, and efficiently as possible while maintain-  
24 ing a forward-looking, holistic, and rigorous ap-  
25 proach to the assessment of the impacts of tech-  
26 nology.”;

1           (2) in paragraph (6), by striking “completed  
2       analyses” and inserting “completed analyses, as well  
3       as preliminary findings of ongoing analyses,”;

4           (3) by striking “and” at the end of paragraph  
5       (7);

6           (4) by striking the period at the end of para-  
7       graph (8) and inserting a semicolon; and

8           (5) by adding at the end the following new  
9       paragraphs:

10          “(9) provide information to Members and com-  
11       mittees of Congress in the form of briefings, infor-  
12       mal conversations, documents, and similar formats  
13       which may be provided expeditiously on the basis of  
14       existing research and staff expertise without the  
15       need for review by the Board;

16          “(10) provide technical assistance to Members  
17       of Congress on legislation related to science and  
18       technology which may be provided expeditiously on  
19       the basis of existing research and staff expertise  
20       without the need for review by the Board; and

21          “(11) when requested, provide objective policy  
22       options to Members on how Members may achieve  
23       goals with respect to science and technology policy.”.

1 (b) REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION OF ASSESS-  
2 MENT ACTIVITIES.—Section 3(d) of such Act (2 U.S.C.  
3 472(d)) is amended to read as follows:

4 “(d)(1) Assessment activities undertaken by the Of-  
5 fice may be initiated upon the request of—

6 “(A) subject to paragraph (2), any Member of  
7 Congress (including a Delegate or Resident Commis-  
8 sioner to the Congress), any standing, special, or se-  
9 lect committee of either House of Congress, or any  
10 joint committee of Congress;

11 “(B) the Board; or

12 “(C) the Director, in consultation with the  
13 Board.

14 “(2) A Member of Congress or committee requesting  
15 that the Office undertake an assessment activity under  
16 paragraph (1)(A) shall submit the request to the Board,  
17 which shall review the request. The Office shall determine  
18 whether or not to undertake an assessment activity in re-  
19 sponse to such a request in accordance with such policies  
20 and procedures as the Office shall establish, under  
21 which—

22 “(A) the Office may give priority to those re-  
23 quests which, in the Board’s determination, relate to  
24 technology issues of the greatest relevance and im-  
25 portance;

1           “(B) to the greatest extent practicable, the Of-  
2       fice shall ensure that the number of assessment ac-  
3       tivities undertaken during a year in response to re-  
4       quests which are submitted by members of one polit-  
5       ical party is equal to the number of assessment ac-  
6       tivities undertaken in response to requests which are  
7       submitted by members of another political party;  
8       and

9           “(C) to the greatest extent practicable, the Of-  
10      fice shall provide the Member or committee submit-  
11      ting the request with information regarding how the  
12      Office reached its determination in response to the  
13      request.”.

14      (c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF FINDINGS OF COM-  
15      PLETED ANALYSES.—Section 3(e) of such Act (2 U.S.C.  
16      472(e)) is amended by inserting after “may be made avail-  
17      able to the public” the following: “(and, in the case of  
18      findings of completed analyses, shall be made available to  
19      the public)”.

20      (d) AUTHORIZING APPOINTMENT OF TECHNICAL  
21      AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ON LEAVE FROM ACA-  
22      DEMIC, INDUSTRIAL, OR RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS.—Sec-  
23      tion 6(f) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 475(f)) is amended by add-  
24      ing at the end the following new sentence: “The Director  
25      may, under the authority provided by this subsection and

1 in accordance with such policies as the Board chooses to  
 2 prescribe, appoint for a limited term, or on a temporary  
 3 basis, scientists, engineers, and other technical and profes-  
 4 sional personnel on leave of absence from academic, indus-  
 5 trial, or research institutions to work for the Office.”.

6 (e) AVOIDING UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION OF RE-  
 7 SEARCH ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER OFFICES.—

8 (1) CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE.—Sec-  
 9 tion 8 of such Act (2 U.S.C. 477) is amended by  
 10 adding at the end the following new subsection:

11 “(e) The Office and the Congressional Research Serv-  
 12 ice shall coordinate technology assessment activities to  
 13 avoid unnecessary duplication or overlapping of research  
 14 activities.”.

15 (2) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE.—  
 16 Section 9 of such Act (2 U.S.C. 478) is amended by  
 17 adding at the end the following new subsection:

18 “(e) The Office and the Government Accountability  
 19 Office shall coordinate technology assessment activities to  
 20 avoid unnecessary duplication or overlapping of research  
 21 activities.”.

22 **SEC. 4. TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT BOARD.**

23 (a) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF BOARD BY CON-  
 24 GRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP.—Section 4(a) of the Tech-

1 nology Assessment Act of 1972 (2 U.S.C. 473) is amend-  
2 ed—

3 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “appointed by  
4 the President pro tempore of the Senate” and in-  
5 serting “appointed jointly by the Majority Leader  
6 and the Minority Leader of the Senate”; and

7 (2) in paragraph (2), by striking “appointed by  
8 the Speaker of the House of Representatives” and  
9 inserting “appointed jointly by the Speaker and Mi-  
10 nority Leader of the House of Representatives”.

11 (b) INVITATION TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO AT-  
12 TEND ANNUAL MEETING OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT  
13 BOARD; ANNUAL REPORT.—Section 4 of such Act (2  
14 U.S.C. 473) is amended by adding at the end the following  
15 new subsections:

16 “(e) At least once during each calendar year, the  
17 Board shall hold a meeting at which Members of Congress  
18 may appear and present information to the Board regard-  
19 ing any technology assessment activities the Members may  
20 wish the Board to undertake.

21 “(f) Not later than 90 days after the end of each cal-  
22 endar year, the Board shall submit to the Subcommittees  
23 on the Legislative Branch of the Committees on Appro-  
24 priations of the House of Representatives and Senate a  
25 report on the activities of the Office during the year, and

1 shall include in the report a description of the technology  
2 assessment activities undertaken by the Office during the  
3 year, including the number of requests received from  
4 Members and committees of Congress under section  
5 2(d)(1)(A), the number and type of assessment activities  
6 undertaken in response to such requests, and the current  
7 status of such assessment activities.”.

○