116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To facilitate the re-opening of schools through study of children’s role in transmitting SARS–CoV–2, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ____________________

A BILL

To facilitate the re-opening of schools through study of children’s role in transmitting SARS–CoV–2, 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 “Protect our Children
5 from COVID–19 Act”.

6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

7 Congress finds the following:
(1) School closures have substantial negative effects on children’s education, mental health, and social development.

(2) In general, school closures compound inequalities in rural and low-income communities, where students often lack access to computers and high-speed internet.

(3) Returning children to the classroom will not only facilitate their development, but also free up their adult caregivers as they return to work.

(4) To date, scientific evidence suggests children have a lower probability of developing a serious illness from COVID–19 than adults. It remains unclear, however, what role children play in transmitting SARS–CoV–2.

(5) Pursuing research that analyzes and understands the transmissibility of SARS–CoV–2 in children will help families, educators, and elected leaders make better decisions on re-opening schools and our economy.

SEC. 3. STUDY ON CHILDREN’S ROLE IN TRANSMITTING SARS–COV–2.

(a) Study.—

(1) In general.—Not later than August 1, 2020, the Secretary of Health and Human Services
(in this section referred to as the “Secretary”), in coordination with the heads of agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services and experts from outside of the Department, as appropriate, shall complete a study on children’s role in transmitting SARS-CoV-2.

(2) ISSUES TO BE STUDIED.—The study under paragraph (1) shall address—

(A) the transmissibility of COVID–19 from child to child, child to adult, and adult to child;

(B) the vulnerability of children, especially those with underlying health conditions, to severe illness as such vulnerability relates to COVID–19;

(C) the vulnerability of adults, especially those with underlying health conditions, who send their children back to school; and

(D) the vulnerability of adults, especially those with underlying health conditions, who interact with children who may be asymptomatic but infectious.

(3) CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out the study under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—
(A) take into consideration the best available science, including as provided by the National Academy of Sciences; and

(B) ensure that such study includes consideration of children who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups.

(b) REPORTING.—Not later than August 1, 2020, and quarterly thereafter through the end of the emergency period, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Congress on children’s role in transmitting SARS–CoV–2. The first such report shall include the results of the study under subsection (a).

(c) DISSEMINATION OF BEST PRACTICES.—Not later than August 1, 2020, and quarterly thereafter through the end of the emergency period, the Secretary shall disseminate to stakeholders best practices for protecting children and adults in educational settings. The first best practices disseminated pursuant to the preceding sentence shall include any best practices for protecting children and adults in educational settings identified through the study under subsection (a).

(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “emergency period” has the meaning given to such term in section 1135(g)(1)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–5(g)(1)(B)).