I

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9194

To amend the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act to support nucleic acid screening, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 30, 2024

Ms. CARAVEO (for herself and Mr. MCCORMICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

---

A BILL

To amend the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act to support nucleic acid screening, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited ''Nucleic Acid Standards for Biosecurity Act''.

SEC. 2. SUPPORTING NUCLEIC ACID SCREENING.

Section 10221 of the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act (42 U.S.C. 18931; enacted as part of title II of division B of Public Law 117–167) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following new subparagraph:

''(D) best practices, guidelines, and technical standards for risk management associated with engineering biology and biomanufacturing, including risks associated with the use of artificial intelligence; and'';

(2) by redesignating subsections (b) and (c) as subsections (c) and (d), respectively; and

(3) by inserting after subsection (a) the following new subsection:

''(b) NUCLEIC ACID SYNTHESIS SCREENING TOOLS AND STANDARDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director, in consultation with heads of Federal agencies the Director considers appropriate, shall carry out measurement research to support the development and improvement of best practices and technical standards for biosecurity measures related to nucleic acid synthesis, including the following:

''(A) Testing to improve the accuracy, efficacy, and reliability of screening for nucleic acid synthesis.

''(B) Best practices, including security and access controls, for operational security and managing sequence-of-concern databases to support such screening.

''(C) Technical implementation guidance to ensure such screening is effective and secure.

''(D) Conformity-assessment best practices and technical standards.

''(E) Methods to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the implementation of subparagraphs (A) through (D).

''(2) CONSORTIUM.—In carrying out this subsection, the Director shall convene a consortium of stakeholders, including industry, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and customers to carry out this following:

''(A) Develop and periodically update consensus priorities and best practices, as appropriate, for synthetic nucleic acid procurement screening mechanisms.

''(B) Develop roadmaps to inform the activities carried out under paragraph (1).

''(3) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the first meeting of the consortium under paragraph (2), the Director shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report summarizing the findings of the consortium.

''(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the funds authorized to be appropriated for the National Institute of Standards and Technology pursuant to this section for scientific and technical research and services laboratory activities, there is authorized to be appropriated $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 to carry out this subsection.''.

○