

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 741

To elevate the position of Director of the Indian Health Service within the Department of Health and Human Services to Assistant Secretary for Indian Health, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 2025

Mr. STANTON (for himself and Mr. JOYCE of Ohio) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To elevate the position of Director of the Indian Health Service within the Department of Health and Human Services to Assistant Secretary for Indian Health, 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 “Stronger Engagement
5 for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INDIAN HEALTH.**

2 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 601(a) of the Indian
3 Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1661(a)) is
4 amended—

5 (1) in paragraph (1), by striking “tribes” and
6 inserting “Tribes”;

7 (2) in paragraph (2)—

8 (A) by striking “a Director” and inserting
9 “an Assistant Secretary for Indian Health (in
10 this section referred to as the ‘Assistant Sec-
11 retary’)”;

12 (B) by striking “The Director shall report”
13 and inserting “The Assistant Secretary shall re-
14 port directly”;

15 (C) by striking “the Director” and insert-
16 ing “the Assistant Secretary”; and

17 (D) by striking “A Director” and inserting
18 “An Assistant Secretary”;

19 (3) in paragraph (3), by striking “date of en-
20 actment of the Indian Health Care Improvement Re-
21 authorization and Extension Act of 2009 shall serve
22 as Director” and inserting “date of enactment of the
23 Stronger Engagement for Indian Health Needs Act
24 of 2025 shall serve as Assistant Secretary”;

1 (4) in paragraph (4), in the matter before sub-
2 paragraph (A), by striking “Director” and inserting
3 “Assistant Secretary”; and

4 (5) by adding at the end the following new
5 paragraph:

6 “(5) DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The As-
7 sistant Secretary, with the approval of the Secretary,
8 may appoint a Deputy Assistant Secretary and may
9 employ and prescribe the functions of such officers
10 and employees, including attorneys, as are necessary
11 to administer the activities of the Service.”.

12 (b) DUTIES.—Section 601(c) of the Indian Health
13 Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1661(c)) is amended—

14 (1) in the matter before paragraph (1), by
15 striking “Director” and inserting “Assistant Sec-
16 retary”; and

17 (2) in paragraph (1), by striking “date of en-
18 actment of the Indian Health Care Improvement Re-
19 authorization and Extension Act of 2009” and in-
20 serting “date of enactment of the Stronger Engage-
21 ment for Indian Health Needs Act of 2025”.

22 (c) AUTHORITY.—Section 601(d)(1) of the Indian
23 Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1661(d)(1)) is
24 amended in the matter before subparagraph (A), by strik-
25 ing “Director” and inserting “Assistant Secretary”.

1 (d) REFERENCES.—Section 601 of the Indian Health
2 Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1661) is amended by
3 adding at the end the following new subsection:

4 “(e) REFERENCES.—Any reference to the Director of
5 the Indian Health Service in any Federal law, Executive
6 order, rule, regulation, or delegation of authority, or in
7 any document of or relating to the Director of the Indian
8 Health Service, shall be deemed to refer to the Assistant
9 Secretary.”.

10 (e) RATE OF BASIC PAY.—

11 (1) POSITIONS AT LEVEL IV.—Section 5315 of
12 title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking
13 “Assistant Secretaries of Health and Human Serv-
14 ices (6)” and inserting “Assistant Secretaries of
15 Health and Human Services (7)”.

16 (2) POSITIONS AT LEVEL V.—Section 5316 of
17 title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking
18 “Director, Indian Health Service, Department of
19 Health and Human Services.”.

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