

104TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 919

To amend title 13, United States Code, to require that the Secretary of Commerce produce and publish, at least every 2 years, current data relating to the incidence of poverty in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 13, 1995

Mr. SAWYER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight

A BILL

To amend title 13, United States Code, to require that the Secretary of Commerce produce and publish, at least every 2 years, current data relating to the incidence of poverty in the United States.

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 “Poverty Data Improve-
5 ment Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

1 (1) more than \$20,000,000,000 is provided to
2 State and local governments each year, under var-
3 ious Federal programs, based on data relating to in-
4 come and poverty status;

5 (2) the infrequency with which such data are
6 collected diminishes their reliability and usefulness
7 for public policy purposes;

8 (3) the relative lack of intercensal data can pre-
9 vent Federal funds from reaching those populations
10 that are in greatest need, as reflected in the dra-
11 matic and often unforeseen shifts in the way Federal
12 funds are reallocated following each decennial cen-
13 sus;

14 (4) the more frequent collection of data relating
15 to income and poverty status would allow policy-
16 makers to target scarce program funds more effec-
17 tively and in a more timely fashion; and

18 (5) the cost of producing the data needed to
19 achieve the ends described in paragraph (4) would
20 be small compared to the amounts that are distrib-
21 uted based on such data.

22 **SEC. 3. REQUIREMENT.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter IV of chapter 5 of
24 title 13, United States Code, is amended by inserting after
25 section 181 the following:

1 **“§ 181a. Data relating to poverty**

2 “(a) The Secretary, to the extent feasible, shall
3 produce and publish for each State, county, and local unit
4 of general purpose government for which data are com-
5 piled in the most recent census of population taken under
6 section 141(a), and for each school district, data relating
7 to the incidence of poverty. Such data may be produced
8 by means of sampling, estimation, or any other method
9 that the Secretary determines will produce current, com-
10 prehensive, and reliable data.

11 “(b) Data under this section—

12 “(1) shall include—

13 “(A) for each school district, the number
14 of children age 5 to 17, inclusive, in families
15 below the poverty level; and

16 “(B) for each State and county referred to
17 in subsection (a), the number of individuals age
18 65 or over below the poverty level; and

19 “(2) shall be published—

20 “(A) in 1996 in the case of each State,
21 county, and local unit of general purpose gov-
22 ernment referred to in subsection (a) and at
23 least every second year thereafter; and

24 “(B) in 1998 in the case of each school
25 district and at least every second year there-
26 after.

1 “(c)(1) If reliable data could not otherwise be pro-
2 duced, the Secretary may, for purposes of subsection
3 (b)(1)(A), aggregate school districts, but only to the extent
4 necessary to achieve reliability.

5 “(2) Any data produced under this subsection shall
6 be appropriately identified and shall be accompanied by
7 a detailed explanation as to how and why aggregation was
8 used (including the measures taken to minimize any
9 such aggregation).

10 “(d) If the Secretary is unable to produce and publish
11 the data required under this section for any State, county,
12 local unit of general purpose government, or school district
13 in any year specified in subsection (b)(2), a report shall
14 be submitted by the Secretary to the President of the Sen-
15 ate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, not
16 later than 90 days before the commencement of the follow-
17 ing year, enumerating each government or school district
18 excluded and giving the reasons for the exclusion.

19 “(e) In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall
20 use the same criteria relating to poverty as were used in
21 compiling the then most recent census of population taken
22 under section 141(a) (subject to such periodic adjustments
23 as may be necessary to compensate for inflation and other
24 similar factors).”.

1 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
2 tions for chapter 5 of title 13, United States Code, is
3 amended by inserting after the item relating to section
4 181 the following:

“181a. Data relating to poverty.”.

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