

AMENDMENT NO. _____ Calendar No. _____

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—116th Cong., 2d Sess.

S. 4632

A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to establish an alternative dispute resolution program for copyright small claims, to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to modify the scope of protection from civil liability for “good Samaritan” blocking and screening of offensive material, and for other purposes.

Referred to the Committee on _____ and
ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended
to be proposed by _____

Viz:

1 Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the fol-
2 lowing:

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “COVID–19
5 Disinformation Research and Reporting Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The National Academies of Sciences, Engi-
9 neering, and Medicine and the National Science
10 Foundation have provided scientific, evidence-based

1 findings and foundational research, across all dis-
2 ciplines, that benefit the people of the United States.

3 (2) Accurate and reliable information is impera-
4 tive for health and safety during a national emer-
5 gency like the COVID–19 pandemic.

6 (3) Disinformation and misinformation have
7 spread alarmingly during the COVID-19 pandemic,
8 hindering the public response efforts of Federal,
9 State, local, and indigenous leaders.

10 (4) The internet and social media have made it
11 easier to spread fake medical information, such as
12 unproven treatments for COVID–19, or inaccurate
13 information that undermines scientific experts.

14 (5) COVID–19-related disinformation has been
15 weaponized by foreign adversaries, including Russia,
16 China, and Iran, through the use of fake social
17 media accounts and bot networks to amplify content.

18 (6) Understanding the financial incentives for
19 entities spreading and amplifying disinformation and
20 misinformation can help to combat its distribution.

21 **SEC. 3. SCIENCE STUDY ON COVID–19-RELATED**
22 **DISINFORMATION AND MISINFORMATION.**

23 (a) STUDY.—Not later than 30 days after the date
24 of enactment of this Act, the Director of the National
25 Science Foundation shall enter into an arrangement with

1 the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and
2 Medicine to conduct a study on the current understanding
3 of the spread of COVID–19-related disinformation and
4 misinformation on the internet and social media plat-
5 forms. The study shall address—

6 (1) the roles disinformation and misinformation
7 have played in the public response to COVID–19;

8 (2) the sources, both foreign and domestic, of
9 COVID–19-related disinformation and misinforma-
10 tion, and the mechanisms by which that
11 disinformation and misinformation influence the
12 public debate;

13 (3) the role social media plays in the dissemina-
14 tion and promotion of COVID–19-related
15 disinformation and misinformation content and the
16 role social media platforms play in the organization
17 of groups seeking to spread COVID–19-related
18 disinformation and misinformation;

19 (4) the potential financial returns for creators
20 or distributors of COVID–19-related disinformation
21 and misinformation and the role such financial in-
22 centives play in the propagation of COVID–19-re-
23 lated disinformation and misinformation;

24 (5) potential strategies to mitigate the dissemi-
25 nation and negative impacts of COVID–19-related

1 disinformation and misinformation (and specifically
2 the dissemination of disinformation and misinforma-
3 tion on social media), including through improved
4 disclosures; and

5 (6) an analysis of—

6 (A) the limitations of the mitigation strate-
7 gies described in paragraph (5); and

8 (B) how the strategies can be implemented
9 without infringing on the constitutional rights
10 and civil liberties of the people of the United
11 States.

12 (b) REPORT.—In entering into an arrangement under
13 this section, the Director of the National Science Founda-
14 tion shall request that the National Academies of Sciences,
15 Engineering, and Medicine transmit to Congress a report
16 on the results of the study not later than 1 year after
17 the date of enactment of this Act.

18 (c) AUTHORIZATION.—There is authorized to be ap-
19 propriated, for the purposes of conducting the study under
20 this section, \$1,000,000.