

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3092

To amend part D of title IV of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to modify the Federal Parent Locator Service to improve search functions and include State responsible father registry search functions, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 28, 2017

Mrs. HARTZLER (for herself, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, and Mrs. WALORSKI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To amend part D of title IV of the Social Security Act to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to modify the Federal Parent Locator Service to improve search functions and include State responsible father registry search functions, 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 “Permanency for Chil-
5 dren Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) A permanent, stable home is critical for the
2 physical and cognitive development of children, and
3 quickly identifying biological fathers after birth is
4 crucial to providing stable, supportive environments
5 for children of unwed mothers and for permanency
6 for adoptive parents.

7 (2) Responsible father registries, sometimes
8 known as putative father registries, help to speed up
9 the stable placement of children by providing a
10 mechanism to determine whether a biological father
11 has a protectable interest in participating in the
12 placement decisions for a child.

13 (3) Thirty-four States have created responsible
14 father registries.

15 (4) Improving the legal mechanisms for finding
16 biological fathers is a necessary step in the progres-
17 sion toward improving permanency for children.

18 (5) In 1975, Congress authorized the creation
19 of the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS),
20 which is an assembly of systems designed to assist
21 States in locating noncustodial parents, putative fa-
22 thers, and custodial parties, for the establishment of
23 paternity and child support obligations.

1 (6) Currently, the FPLS can only be searched
 2 by social security number or date of birth, which
 3 limits the effectiveness of this tool.

4 (7) Improving the search functions of the
 5 FPLS will allow for more effective use of the data-
 6 base while maintaining important privacy protections
 7 to provide expedited permanency for children.

8 (8) National cross-referencing of responsible fa-
 9 ther registries in the FPLS would protect registered
 10 fathers against court actions in unknown States
 11 where the child or mother may have traveled or
 12 where the adoptive parents reside.

13 **SEC. 3. RESPONSIBLE FATHER REGISTRY.**

14 (a) REQUIREMENT TO MODIFY FEDERAL PARENT
 15 LOCATOR SERVICE.—Section 453 of the Social Security
 16 Act (42 U.S.C. 653) is amended by adding at the end the
 17 following:

18 “(q) RESPONSIBLE FATHER REGISTRY.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the preceding
 20 provisions of this section, the Secretary shall, in col-
 21 laboration with the States, modify the Federal Par-
 22 ent Locator Service to improve search functions to
 23 allow State agencies administering State responsible
 24 father registries to electronically exchange identi-
 25 fying information of mothers and putative fathers of

1 children, and, to the extent possible, to allow a sin-
2 gle Federal Parent Locator Service query to search
3 for a putative father registered in any State respon-
4 sible father registry.

5 “(2) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term
6 ‘responsible father registry’ means a registry for the
7 receipt of information which directly relates to the
8 identity or location of biological fathers who have
9 voluntarily registered to assert their paternal rights
10 to a child they may have fathered out of wedlock.”.

11 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after the
12 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall sub-
13 mit to Congress a report on the implementation of the re-
14 quirement under section 453(q) of the Social Security Act,
15 as added by subsection (a) of this section. Such report
16 shall also—

17 (1) include a framework to assist States with-
18 out responsible father registries in setting up such
19 a State registry or coordinating with an existing
20 such State registry;

21 (2) provide direction to States with existing
22 State responsible father registries on best practices
23 for improving efficiencies of such registries; and

24 (3) identify administrative and legislative op-
25 tions for ensuring every putative father has access to

1 the protections of a responsible father registry re-
2 gardless of the State or territory in which the father
3 resides.

4 **SEC. 4. PARTIES AUTHORIZED TO ACCESS FEDERAL PAR-**
5 **ENT LOCATOR SERVICE.**

6 (a) STATE RESPONSIBLE FATHER REGISTRIES.—
7 Section 453(c)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
8 653(c)(4)) is amended by inserting “, or that is admin-
9 istering a State responsible father registry” after “part
10 E”.

11 (b) ADOPTION AND DEPENDENCY COURTS.—Section
12 453(c)(2) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 653(c)(2)) is amended—

13 (1) by striking “the court” and inserting “any
14 court”; and

15 (2) by inserting “or an action relating to the
16 dependency or adoption of a child,” after “main-
17 tenance of a child,”.

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