

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8542

To prohibit the use of Federal funds by the Department of Health and Human Services, before November 3, 2020, on a public service announcement and advertising campaign intended to positively influence public perception, misrepresent facts, or encourage risky behavior, regarding the COVID–19 pandemic.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 6, 2020

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY (for himself, Ms. DELAURO, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. CLYBURN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To prohibit the use of Federal funds by the Department of Health and Human Services, before November 3, 2020, on a public service announcement and advertising campaign intended to positively influence public perception, misrepresent facts, or encourage risky behavior, regarding the COVID–19 pandemic.

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 “Defeat Pandemic
5 Propaganda Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) over 200,000 Americans have died of
4 COVID–19;

5 (2) there is no vaccine for COVID–19 approved
6 by the Food and Drug Administration;

7 (3) on August 31, 2020, the Department of
8 Health and Human Services signed an approxi-
9 mately \$250,000,000 contract for a public service
10 announcement and advertising campaign to, in part,
11 “defeat despair and inspire hope, sharing best prac-
12 tices for businesses to operate in the new normal
13 and instill confidence to return to work and restart
14 the economy” amidst the COVID–19 pandemic; and

15 (4) a presidential election is to be held on No-
16 vember 3, 2020, approximately 2 months from the
17 date the contract was signed.

18 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

19 It is the sense of the Congress that—

20 (1) a public service announcement and adver-
21 tising campaign to promote a return to previous ac-
22 tivities amidst the COVID–19 pandemic could en-
23 courage Americans to defy recommendations by Fed-
24 eral, State, and local public health authorities; and

25 (2) a public service announcement and adver-
26 tising campaign promoting a positive outlook on a

1 pandemic that has resulted in the deaths of over
2 200,000 Americans, to air in the weeks preceding a
3 presidential election, would be an unethical use of
4 Federal funds.

5 **SEC. 4. NO FEDERAL FUNDS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AN-**
6 **NOUNCEMENT AND ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN.**

7 No Federal funds may be obligated or expended by
8 the Department of Health and Human Services, before
9 November 3, 2020, on a public service announcement and
10 advertising campaign intended—

11 (1) to positively influence public perception re-
12 garding the COVID–19 pandemic;

13 (2) to misrepresent facts regarding the
14 COVID–19 pandemic; or

15 (3) to encourage engagement in activities that
16 carry an undue risk of contracting COVID–19.

○