

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 620

AN ACT

To provide public health veterinary services to Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations for rabies prevention, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Veterinary Services
3 to Improve Public Health in Rural Communities Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

5 It is the sense of Congress that the Indian Health
6 Service of the Department of Health and Human Services
7 is uniquely suited to empower Indian Tribes and Tribal
8 organizations to address zoonotic disease threats in the
9 communities they serve by providing public health veteri-
10 nary services through a One Health approach that recog-
11 nizes the interconnection between people, animals, plants,
12 and their shared environment.

13 **SEC. 3. PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARY SERVICES.**

14 Title II of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act
15 is amended by inserting after section 223 (25 U.S.C.
16 1621v) the following:

17 **“SEC. 224. PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARY SERVICES.**

18 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

19 “(1) PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARY SERV-
20 ICES.—The term ‘public health veterinary services’
21 includes any of the following:

22 “(A) Spaying and neutering services for
23 domestic animals.

24 “(B) Diagnoses.

25 “(C) Surveillance.

26 “(D) Epidemiology.

1 “(E) Control.

2 “(F) Prevention.

3 “(G) Elimination.

4 “(H) Vaccination.

5 “(I) Any other related service or activity
6 that reduces the risk of zoonotic disease trans-
7 mission or antimicrobial resistance in humans,
8 food, or animals.

9 “(2) ZOONOTIC DISEASE.—The term ‘zoonotic
10 disease’ means a disease or infection that may be
11 transmitted naturally from vertebrate animals to hu-
12 mans, or from humans to vertebrate animals.

13 “(b) AUTHORIZATION FOR VETERINARY SERVICES.—
14 The Secretary, acting through the Service, may expend
15 funds, directly or pursuant to the Indian Self-Determina-
16 tion and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et
17 seq.), for public health veterinary services to prevent and
18 control zoonotic disease infection and transmission in
19 Service areas where the risk for disease occurrence in hu-
20 mans and wildlife is endemic.

21 “(c) PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS; COORDINATION.—
22 In providing public health veterinary services under sub-
23 section (b), the Secretary may—

1 “(1) assign or deploy veterinary public health
 2 officers from the Commissioned Corps of the Public
 3 Health Service to Service areas; and

4 “(2) coordinate and implement activities with—
 5 “(A) the Director of the Centers for Dis-
 6 ease Control and Prevention; and

7 “(B) the Secretary of Agriculture.

8 “(d) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the
 9 Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate, the Committee
 10 on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate,
 11 the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Rep-
 12 resentatives, and the Committee on Energy and Commerce
 13 of the House of Representatives a biennial report on the
 14 use of funds, the assignment and deployment of veterinary
 15 public health officers from the Commissioned Corps of the
 16 Public Health Service, data related to the monitoring and
 17 disease surveillance of zoonotic diseases, and related serv-
 18 ices provided under this section.”.

19 **SEC. 4. APHIS WILDLIFE SERVICES STUDY ON ORAL RABIES**
 20 **VACCINES IN ARCTIC REGIONS OF THE**
 21 **UNITED STATES.**

22 Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment
 23 of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall conduct a
 24 feasibility study—

(1) on the delivery of oral rabies vaccines to wildlife reservoir species that are directly or indirectly connected to the transmission of rabies to Tribal members living in Arctic regions of the United States; and

(2) that—

(A) evaluates the efficacy of the vaccines described in paragraph (1); and

(B) makes recommendations to improve the delivery of those vaccines.

SEC. 5. ONE HEALTH FRAMEWORK.

Section 2235(b) of the Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging New Threats, and Pandemics Act (42 U.S.C. 300hh–37(b)) is amended by striking “and the Secretary of the Interior” and inserting “, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Director of the Indian Health Service”.

Passed the Senate December 11, 2025.

Attest:

Secretary.

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