A BILL

To establish a temporary Presidential commission to study and to report on problems related to blindness and the needs of blind persons, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

FINDINGS AND DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

SECTION 1. (a) The Congress recognizes that there are about three hundred and fifty thousand blind persons in the United States; that the number in ten years can be expected to be in excess of four hundred thousand; that many blind people do not have the opportunity to achieve full independence in their personal lives or to participate actively in keeping with their potential abilities in the economic, social,
cultural, and educational life of the Nation; that this condi-
tion exists despite expenditure of public funds over a period
of many years to remedy such conditions; and that, con-
sequently, there is need for further study and evaluation of
programs and activities conducted in behalf of blind persons
to determine what contributions to their welfare are being
made and, in the light of present and future social, tech-
nological, and scientific developments, what contributions
can be made to their welfare and to the better realization of
their potential abilities, thus advancing also the general wel-
fare and economy of the Nation.

(b) It is hereby declared to be the purpose of the Con-
gress to assist in creating a national atmosphere for the de-
development of a positive role for, and wider acceptance of,
blind persons in our modern society by providing for a
thorough study and evaluation of the needs and potentiali-
ties of blind persons and problems of a socio-economic na-
ture engendered by and related to blindness, as well as the
extent and character of Federal tax-supported programs
and activities designed to insure the solution of these prob-
lems and the meeting of these needs, present and future.
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL STUDY COMMISSION ON POTENTIALITIES AND PROBLEMS OF BLIND PERSONS

SEC. 2. There is hereby established a Presidential Study Commission on Potentialities and Problems of the Blind (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the “Commission”).

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION

SEC. 3. (a) The Commission shall consist of nine members appointed by the President from among widely recognized leaders in private life, public life, and the pertinent professions who can contribute materially to the proper carrying out of the intent and purposes of this Act as set forth in section 1 and section 4. The President shall designate one of the members to serve as Chairman.

(b) Five members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

SEC. 4. (a) The Commission shall acquaint itself with established and accepted standards of existing services for the advancement of blind persons, shall evaluate and determine the adequacy and suitability of such existing standards,
and shall propose standards in those areas of service in which none exist. Study, evaluation, and formulation of standards designed to carry out the spirit and intent of this Act shall be made with particular attention to—

1. the structure, scope, and administration of the laws of the United States providing for expenditure of Federal public funds, in whole or in part, on programs and activities, national, regional, or State, for blind persons;

2. appraisal of the quantity and quality of all services, programs and activities for blind persons, other than medical research, which are supported in whole or in part by Federal funds, specifically including the following:

   (A) provisions for the education of preschool and school-age blind children;

   (B) prevocational and nonvocational rehabilitation programs, including rehabilitation to the point of self-care, and rehabilitation centers;

   (C) vocational rehabilitation programs, including rehabilitation centers, employment services, industrial homework programs, workshops, and business enterprises;

   (D) books for the blind in raised print and re-
corded form and library services, including problems
of procurement and distribution;

(E) basic and supplemental social service pro-
grams for meeting the total needs of a blind person
and his family;

(F) public welfare programs, such as disability
insurance and public assistance;

(G) nonmedical aspects of optical aids and pre-
vention of blindness programs;

(H) social and technological research needed
now and in the future to carry out the spirit and
intent of this Act;

(I) appraisal of professional caliber and train-
ing of personnel providing services to blind persons
in programs covered by this Act; and

(J) other services, programs, and activities
within the provisions of this Act deemed appropriate
by the Commission for study, evaluation, and for-}
mulation of standards.

(b) The Commission shall report the results of its
studies to the President and to the Congress not later than
thirty months after the date of enactment of this Act, such
final report to include recommendations for appropriate ac-

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tion, including legislation, specifically designed to support the spirit and intent of this Act. The Commission may also make such earlier progress reports to the President and the Congress as it may deem appropriate.

COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Sec. 5. (a) Any member of the Commission who is an officer or employee of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for his services as an officer or employee of the United States; but he shall be reimbursed for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by him in the performance of duties vested in the Commission.

(b) Any member of the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the United States shall receive $50 per diem when engaged in the performance of duties vested in the Commission, plus reimbursement for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by him in the performance of such duties.

STAFF OF THE COMMISSION

Sec. 6. (a) The Chairman shall, without regard to the civil service or classification laws, appoint and fix the compensation of an Executive Director.

(b) The Chairman shall, without regard to the civil service or classification laws, appoint and fix the compensa-
tion of such other personnel as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

(c) For the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this Act, the Chairman may, with the advice and consent of the Commission, appoint to the Commission staff, persons employed by recognized organizations and agencies serving blind persons, such persons to serve the Commission without compensation except for reimbursement of travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties on behalf of the Commission.

POWERS AND PROCEDURES OF THE COMMISSION

Sec. 7. (a) The Commission, or any member so authorized by the Chairman, may, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act, hold such hearings and sit and act at such times and places and take such testimony as the Commission or the Chairman may deem advisable. Any member of the Commission may administer oaths or affirmations to witnesses appearing before the Commission or before any duly authorized member thereof.

(b) The Commission, or any member so authorized by the Chairman, may visit and observe activities and programs within the scope of this Act designed to serve blind persons.

(c) The Commission, or any member so authorized by the Chairman, is authorized to secure directly from any de-
partment or agency of the Federal Government such information and assistance, not inconsistent with the provisions of any Federal law, as it finds necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act; and each such Federal department or agency is authorized and directed to furnish such information and assistance.

(d) The Commission, or any member so authorized by the Chairman, may invite individuals as well as organizations and agencies, both governmental and voluntary, to submit in writing, either in lieu of or in conjunction with oral presentations, their views on services, programs, activities, and other matters within the scope of this Act.

(e) At the direction of the Chairman and under the supervision of the Executive Director, the staff of the Commission shall prepare preliminary working documents dealing in detail with various aspects of the study provided for in section 4 of this Act for the use of the Commission in the preparation of its final report.

(f) The Commission, or any member so authorized by the Chairman, shall have power to have printing and binding done and to make such expenditures deemed advisable by the Commission within the amount appropriated under authority of this Act.
1 APPROPRIATION AUTHORIZATION

2 Sec. 8. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated
3 the sum of $450,000 to carry out the provisions of this Act.

4 TERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION

5 Sec. 9. The Commission shall cease to exist within
6 thirty days after submitting to the President and to the Con-
7 gress its final report made in accordance with the provisions
8 of section 4 of this Act.