

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. _____

To establish a commission on robotics, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. McCORMICK (for himself and Mr. HICKENLOOPER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To establish a commission on robotics, 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 “National Commission
5 on Robotics Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ROBOTICS.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after
9 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
10 shall establish an independent commission to be

1 known as the “Commission on American Leadership
2 in Robotics” (in this section referred to as the
3 “Commission”).

4 (2) PURPOSE.—The Commission shall—

5 (A) examine robotics as it pertains to
6 interstate and foreign commerce, economic com-
7 petitiveness, and national security; and

8 (B) make recommendations relating there-
9 to to the appropriate congressional committees.

10 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

11 (1) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Com-
12 mission shall be composed of 18 members appointed
13 as follows:

14 (A) Three members appointed by the
15 Speaker of the House of Representatives.

16 (B) Three members appointed by the Mi-
17 nority Leader of the House of Representatives.

18 (C) Three members appointed by the Ma-
19 jority Leader of the Senate.

20 (D) Three members appointed by the Mi-
21 nority Leader of the Senate.

22 (E) Six members appointed by the Presi-
23 dent of the United States.

24 (2) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENT.—Members
25 shall be appointed to the Commission by not later

1 than 45 days after the date on which the Commis-
2 sion is established under subsection (a).

3 (3) EFFECT OF LACK OF APPOINTMENT BY AP-
4 POINTMENT DATE.—If one or more appointments
5 under paragraph (1) are not made by the appoint-
6 ment date specified in paragraph (2), the authority
7 to make such appointment or appointments shall ex-
8 pire, and the number of members of the Commission
9 shall be reduced to the number of appointments
10 made to the Commission as of that date.

11 (4) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members of the Com-
12 mission shall be individuals who are recognized ex-
13 perts and have appropriate professional experience
14 in matters relating to any of the following:

15 (A) Robotics.

16 (B) Applications, or potential applications,
17 of robotics by the private sector or public sec-
18 tor.

19 (C) Impacts of robotics on economic com-
20 petitiveness, including economics, international
21 trade, or supply chain analysis.

22 (c) CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.—

23 (1) CHAIR.—The Majority Leader of the Senate
24 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives

1 shall jointly designate one member of the Commis-
2 sion to serve as Chair of the Commission.

3 (2) VICE CHAIR.—The Minority Leader of the
4 Senate and the Minority Leader of the House of
5 Representatives shall jointly designate one member
6 of the Commission to serve as Vice Chair of the
7 Commission.

8 (d) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT AND VACANCIES.—

9 (1) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT.—Members shall
10 be appointed for the life of the Commission.

11 (2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission
12 shall not affect its powers and shall be filled in the
13 same manner as the original appointment was made.

14 (e) SCOPE AND DUTIES.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall carry
16 out a review of advances in robotics.

17 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In carrying out the re-
18 view under paragraph (1), the Commission shall con-
19 sider the methods, means, and policies necessary to
20 advance the development of robotics by the United
21 States to comprehensively address the economic
22 competitiveness and national security needs of the
23 United States.

1 (3) SCOPE OF THE REVIEW.—In conducting the
2 review under paragraph (1), the Commission shall
3 consider the following:

4 (A) The competitiveness of the United
5 States in robotics, including matters related to
6 the domestic marketplace for robotics and pri-
7 vate sector and public sector applications of ro-
8 botics in the United States.

9 (B) Means and methods for the United
10 States to assert and maintain a technological
11 advantage in robotics, specifically in the deploy-
12 ment of robotics in industrial, retail, and com-
13 mercial sectors in the United States.

14 (C) International developments and trends,
15 including foreign actions and policies to ad-
16 vance robotics.

17 (D) Means by which to foster greater em-
18 phasis and investments in robotics to stimulate
19 strategic partnerships in robotics with industry,
20 the public, and academic institutions, to the ex-
21 tent that such efforts have material application
22 related to economic competitiveness and manu-
23 facturing.

24 (E) Workforce incentives and programs to
25 attract and recruit leading talent in robotics,

1 including in associated science, technology, en-
2 gineering, and mathematics fields, to the extent
3 that such efforts relate to economic competitive-
4 ness in robotics.

5 (F) The global and domestic supply chain
6 for robotics, including any supply chain risks or
7 dependencies, and policies to increase the man-
8 ufacturing of robotics in the United States.

9 (G) Any other matters the Commission de-
10 termines appropriate related to robotics.

11 (f) COMMISSION REPORT AND RECOMMENDA-
12 TIONS.—

13 (1) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than one year
14 after the date on which the Commission is estab-
15 lished under subsection (a), the Commission shall
16 submit to the appropriate congressional committees
17 and the President an interim report on the status of
18 the review by the Commission under subsection (e),
19 including a discussion of any interim recommenda-
20 tions.

21 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than two years
22 after the date on which the Commission is estab-
23 lished under subsection (a), the Commission shall
24 submit to the appropriate congressional committees
25 and the President a final report on the findings of

1 the Commission and such recommendations as the
2 Commission may have for action by Congress and
3 the Federal Government.

4 (g) GOVERNMENT COOPERATION.—

5 (1) COOPERATION.—In carrying out its duties
6 under this section, the Commission shall receive the
7 full and timely cooperation of the Secretary and the
8 heads of other relevant Federal departments and
9 agencies in providing the Commission with analysis,
10 briefings, and other information necessary for the
11 fulfillment of such duties.

12 (2) LIAISON.—The Secretary shall designate at
13 least one officer or employee of the Department to
14 serve as a liaison officer between the Secretary and
15 the Commission.

16 (3) DETAILEES AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary
17 and the heads of other relevant Federal departments
18 and agencies may provide, and the Commission may
19 accept and employ, personnel detailed from the De-
20 partment and such other Federal departments and
21 agencies, as the case may be, without reimburse-
22 ment.

23 (4) FACILITATION OF CERTAIN SERVICES.—

24 (A) INDEPENDENT, NONGOVERNMENTAL
25 INSTITUTE.—Not later than 45 days after the

1 date on which the Commission is established
2 under subsection (a), the Secretary may make
3 available to the Commission the services of an
4 independent, nongovernmental institute de-
5 scribed in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Rev-
6 enue Code of 1986, and exempt from tax under
7 section 501(a) of such Code, that has recog-
8 nized credentials and expertise in economic
9 competitiveness and technology in order to fa-
10 cilitate the discharge of the duties of the Com-
11 mission under this section.

12 (B) FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH AND
13 DEVELOPMENT CENTER.—On request of the
14 Commission, the Secretary shall make available
15 to the Commission the services of a federally
16 funded research and development center that is
17 covered by a sponsoring agreement of the De-
18 partment in order to enhance the efforts of the
19 Commission to discharge its duties under this
20 section.

21 (5) OTHER SERVICES.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may
23 provide to the Commission, on a nonreimburs-
24 able basis, such administrative services, funds,
25 staff, facilities, and other support services as

1 are necessary for the discharge of the duties of
2 the Commission under this section.

3 (B) OTHER AGENCIES.—In addition to any
4 support provided under subparagraph (A), the
5 heads of other relevant Federal departments
6 and agencies may provide to the Commission
7 such services, funds, facilities, staff, and other
8 support as such heads determine advisable and
9 as may be authorized by law.

10 (h) STAFF.—

11 (1) STATUS AS FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—Not-
12 withstanding the requirements of section 2105 of
13 title 5, United States Code, including the required
14 supervision under subsection (a)(3) of such section,
15 a member of the Commission shall be considered to
16 be a Federal employee.

17 (2) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Commission
18 shall appoint and fix the rate of basic pay for an Ex-
19 ecutive Director in accordance with section 3161(d)
20 of title 5, United States Code.

21 (3) PAY.—The Executive Director, with the ap-
22 proval of the Commission, may appoint and fix the
23 rate of basic pay for additional personnel as staff of
24 the Commission in accordance with section 3161(d)
25 of title 5, United States Code.

1 (i) PERSONAL SERVICES.—

2 (1) AUTHORITY TO PROCURE.—The Commis-
3 sion may—

4 (A) procure the services of experts or con-
5 sultants (or of organizations of experts or con-
6 sultants) in accordance with the provisions of
7 section 3109 of title 5, United States Code; and

8 (B) pay in connection with such services
9 travel expenses of individuals, including trans-
10 portation and per diem in lieu of subsistence,
11 while such individuals are traveling from their
12 homes or places of business to duty stations.

13 (2) MAXIMUM DAILY PAY RATES.—The daily
14 rate paid an expert or consultant procured pursuant
15 to paragraph (1) may not exceed the daily rate paid
16 a person occupying a position at level IV of the Ex-
17 ecutive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5,
18 United States Code.

19 (j) AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT GIFTS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may ac-
21 cept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of serv-
22 ices, goods, and property from non-Federal entities
23 for the purposes of aiding and facilitating the work
24 of the Commission.

1 (2) EXCLUSION OF MONEY.—The authority
2 under paragraph (1) does not extend to gifts of
3 money.

4 (3) DOCUMENTATION AND CONFLICTS.—Gifts
5 accepted under the authority under paragraph (1)
6 shall be documented, and conflicts of interest or the
7 appearance of conflicts of interest shall be avoided.

8 (4) APPLICATION OF RULES.—Subject to the
9 authority in this section, members of the Commis-
10 sion shall otherwise comply with rules set forth by
11 the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate and
12 the Committee on Ethics of the House of Represent-
13 atives governing employees of the Senate and the
14 House of Representatives, respectively.

15 (k) LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The
16 Commission shall operate as a legislative advisory com-
17 mittee.

18 (l) CONTRACTING AUTHORITY.—The Commission
19 may acquire such administrative supplies and equipment
20 as necessary for Commission use to the extent funds are
21 available.

22 (m) USE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INFORMA-
23 TION.—The Commission may secure directly from any
24 Federal department or agency such information as the
25 Commission considers necessary to discharge its duties.

1 Upon such request of the Chair of the Commission, the
2 head of such Federal department or agency shall furnish
3 such information to the Commission.

4 (n) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use
5 the United States mail in the same manner and under the
6 same conditions as Federal departments and agencies.

7 (o) SPACE FOR USE OF COMMISSION.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after
9 the date on which the Commission is established
10 under subsection (a), the Administrator of General
11 Services, in consultation with the Commission, shall
12 identify and make available suitable excess space
13 within the Federal space inventory to house the op-
14 erations of the Commission.

15 (2) LEASE.—If the Administrator is not able to
16 make suitable excess space available within the 30-
17 day period under paragraph (1), the Commission
18 may lease space to the extent funds are available.

19 (p) REMOVAL OF MEMBERS.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—A member may be removed
21 from the Commission for cause by the individual
22 serving in the position responsible for the original
23 appointment of such member under subsection
24 (b)(1), if notice has first been provided to such
25 member of the cause for such removal and such re-

1 removal is voted and agreed upon by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the mem-
2 bers serving.

3 (2) VACANCY.—A vacancy created by removal
4 under paragraph (1) shall not affect the powers of
5 the Commission, and shall be filled in the same
6 manner as the original appointment was made.

7 (q) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall terminate
8 18 months after the date on which the Commission sub-
9 mits the final report required under subsection (f)(2).

10 (r) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
12 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
13 mittees” means the Committee on Commerce,
14 Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the
15 Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House
16 of Representatives.

17 (2) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department”
18 means the Department of Commerce.

19 (3) ROBOTICS.—The term “robotics” includes
20 each of the following:

21 (A) Programmable multifunctional me-
22 chanical devices designed to move material,
23 parts, tools, or specialized devices through vari-
24 able programmed motions to perform a variety
25 of tasks.

1 (B) Programmed actuated mechanisms
2 with a degree of autonomy to perform loco-
3 motion, manipulation, or positioning.

4 (C) Automatically controlled, reprogram-
5 mable, multipurpose manipulators, program-
6 mable in three or more axes, which can be ei-
7 ther fixed in place or fixed to a mobile platform
8 for use in automation applications in an indus-
9 trial environment.

10 (D) Machines that—

11 (i) can sense their environment;

12 (ii) have the capacity to process the
13 information they sense; and

14 (iii) are organized to act directly upon
15 their environment.

16 (E) Mechanical devices that are capable of
17 locomotion, navigation, or movement on the
18 ground, and operate at a distance from one or
19 more operators or supervisors based on com-
20 mands or in response to sensor data, or
21 through any combination thereof, and that may
22 also be referred to as “unmanned ground vehi-
23 cle systems”.

24 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
25 the Secretary of Commerce.