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## [H.R. 1462, Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015](#)

### FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, September 8, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 1462](#), *the Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 1462 was introduced on March 19, 2015 by Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA) and was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, which ordered the bill reported by voice vote on July 29, 2015.

### SUMMARY

H.R. 1462 directs the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to conduct a study to identify and make available best practices for preventing and treating prenatal opioid abuse and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). The report, required no later than one year after enactment, must include an assessment of existing research with respect to the prevention, identification, and treatment of NAS, an evaluation of risk factors surrounding NAS, and recommendations regarding best practices for its prevention and treatment. The bill also requires HHS to evaluate and coordinate federal efforts to research and respond to NAS and assist state health agencies with their data collection efforts.

### BACKGROUND

NAS “refers to medical issues associated with drug withdrawal in newborns due to exposure to opioids or other drugs in utero.”<sup>1</sup> According to a 2012 [report](#), a significant rise in opiate abuse has led to a substantial increase of babies born with NAS. In the United States, the incidence of NAS has risen from 1.20 per 1,000 hospital births in 2000 to 3.39 per 1,000 hospital births in 2009.<sup>2</sup> The average cost of hospital treatment for NAS increased from \$39,400 to \$53,400 during that time.<sup>3</sup> Babies born with NAS can be hospitalized for weeks and suffer from seizures, respiratory impairments, tremors, and difficulty feeding. According to the bill sponsor, the legislation “is a

<sup>1</sup> See Committee on Energy and Commerce [background memorandum](#) at 2.

<sup>2</sup> H.R. 1462, section 2, paragraph (3).

<sup>3</sup> Id. at paragraph (5).

common sense approach to determining how to best care for these newborns while also addressing the enormous cost of that care.”<sup>4</sup>

## **COST**

A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimate is currently unavailable.

## **STAFF CONTACT**

For questions or further information please contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.

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<sup>4</sup> See Press Release—“[Rep Clark, Sen McConnell, Sen Casey, Rep Stivers introduce bill to help newborns suffering from opiate dependency](#),” March 19, 2015.