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Bipartisan Priority Reform Commission Act (BPRCA)

120th CONGRESS — 1st Session

H.R. / S. [Date]

[Sponsors] introduced the following bill; referred to Committee on [Committee Name].

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the "Bipartisan Priority Reform Commission Act".

SECTION 2. FINDINGS

Congress finds that:

(a) Long-standing national issues have not been resolved due to legislative gridlock. Issues urgently in need of effective legislation include:

(i) Comprehensive immigration reform

(ii) Social Security funding reform

(iii) Medicare and Medicaid funding reform

(iv) Health care insurance policy and regulation

(v) Housing policy and regulation

(vi) Structural budget deficits

(vii) Federal primary and general election reform

(viii) Artificial intelligence regulation

(b) Independent, bipartisan reform processes can improve congressional efficiency while preserving institutional safeguards.

(c) Mechanisms providing transparency, public hearings, minority reporting, and procedural oversight are essential to maintain public trust.

(d) Congress has previously established bipartisan advisory and reform commissions, including the Base Realignment and Closure process and the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform (Simpson–Bowles). These examples illustrate different approaches to structured recommendations and congressional consideration; the commissions and procedures established by this Act are governed solely by its terms.

TITLE I — PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

SEC. 101. PURPOSE

The purposes of this Act are to:

(a) Establish bicameral, independent, bipartisan Reform Commissions to develop recommendations for national Priority Issues;

(b) Ensure public hearings, transparency, and public comment;

(c) Require Congress to consider Commission recommendations under expedited procedures for selected Priority Issues;

(d) Allow Members to submit amendments during Amendment Windows consistent with Commission findings;

(e) Guarantee independent oversight of Commission operations through an empowered Oversight Board;

(f) Provide a procedural exception in the Senate for legislation implementing Commission recommendations and for eligible fallback legislation;

(g) Permit Congress to select one or two Priority Issues per two-year session for Commission consideration and ensure timely action.

SEC. 102. DEFINITIONS

(a) **Priority Issues** — Any of the following:

1. Comprehensive immigration reform
2. Social Security funding reform
3. Medicare and Medicaid funding reform
4. Health care insurance policy and regulation
5. Housing policy and regulation

6. Structural budget deficits

7. Federal primary and general election reform

8. Artificial intelligence regulation

(b) **Commission** — A 16-member Reform Commission established under Title II for a selected Priority Issue.

(c) **Implementing Bill** — A bill containing statutory provisions approved by the Commission under section 203 to address a selected Priority Issue.

(d) **Amendment Window** — The period under section 206 during which Members of Congress may submit proposed amendments to a draft Implementing Bill or proposals eligible for fallback consideration.

(e) **(e) Fallback Bill —** A bill based on one or more legislative proposals identified in the Commission's report under section 204, a substitute report issued under section 204(b), or transmitted to the Oversight Board following an impasse under section 203(c), but not approved as an Implementing Bill under section 203. A proposal transmitted following an impasse under section 203(c) shall be eligible for submission as a Fallback Bill immediately upon transmission, without awaiting issuance of the Commission's report or expiration of the ten-month period under section 204. A Fallback Bill shall qualify for expedited congressional consideration only upon satisfaction of the applicable bipartisan sponsorship and certification requirements of Title IV and section 303(b) and (c).

(f) **Oversight Board** — The independent supervisory entity established under Title V.

(g) **Legislative Members** — The eight Members of Congress serving on a Commission: two Members of each party from each chamber, as provided in section 202.

TITLE II — SELECTION OF PRIORITY ISSUES AND COMMISSIONS

SEC. 201. SELECTION OF PRIORITY ISSUES

(a) Within 60 calendar days after the convening of each Congress, the House and the Senate may select one or two Priority Issues by agreeing to the same concurrent resolution, adopted by a majority of those voting in each chamber. A concurrent resolution under this section shall identify the selected Issue or Issues and shall not require presidential presentment.

(b) **Expedited selection procedures**. A concurrent resolution under subsection (a) shall be privileged for consideration in each chamber and shall be subject to the following procedures:

(i) **House:** consideration shall begin not later than 10 legislative days after introduction; debate is limited to 10 hours; amendments are not in order; and a vote on adoption shall follow the close of debate without intervening motion.

(ii) **Senate:** consideration shall begin not later than 10 legislative days after introduction; debate is limited to 10 hours; amendments are not in order; motions to proceed are not debatable; Rule XXII shall not apply; and a vote on adoption shall follow the close of debate without intervening motion.

(c) **Automatic designation**. If the chambers have not agreed to a concurrent resolution within 60 calendar days after the convening of a Congress, the first Priority Issue in the order listed in section 102(a) not previously designated under this Act shall automatically be designated. The same Issue may be designated again by concurrent resolution. The Clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate shall jointly publish the list of issues designated under this Act.

SEC. 202. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

(a) **Each Commission consists of 16 members:**

1. Eight non-legislative experts, appointed on a bipartisan basis.

2. Eight legislative members (4 from the House: 2 Democrats + 2 Republicans; 4 from the Senate: 2 Democrats + 2 Republicans).

(b) **Appointment rules:**

1. The respective majority and minority leaders of each chamber shall each appoint two Legislative Members from that chamber belonging to their party, not later than 30 calendar days after selection of a Priority Issue.

2. The Oversight Board shall appoint eight non-legislative experts by an affirmative vote of at least three Board members, after publicly soliciting recommendations from both parties; no more than four experts may be affiliated with the same political party. Expert appointments shall be completed within 30 calendar days after designation.

(c) **Term and removal:**

1. Commissioners serve until the end of the Congress for which they were appointed, except as needed to complete work expressly preserved under Title VI.

2. Legislative members may be removed and replaced by their appointing leadership only.

3. Non-legislative members may be removed for cause by the Oversight Board.

(d) **First meeting.** The Commission shall meet within 14 calendar days after at least 12 members have been appointed, including at least one Legislative Member from each party in each chamber; vacancies shall not delay the remaining appointments or reduce the voting threshold in section 203.

(e) **Failure to appoint**. If a congressional leader fails to appoint a Legislative Member within 30 calendar days, that seat remains vacant until appointed by that leader. If the Oversight Board fails to appoint an expert within 30 calendar days, the Comptroller General may select an expert to fill that expert seat within 15 additional calendar days. Neither the Board nor the Comptroller General may appoint a Member of Congress. Vacancies do not diminish the nine-vote requirement or the bipartisan Legislative Member requirement of section 203.

SEC. 203. APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

(a) **Approval.** A proposal shall be Commission-approved only upon at least nine affirmative votes of the full 16-member Commission, including at least two affirmative votes from Legislative Members of each party. Vacancies, abstentions, and recusals do not lower these thresholds.

(b) **Tie votes and failed proposals.** A tie vote, or any vote failing to satisfy subsection (a), does not approve a proposal. The vote and the text of the proposal shall be included in the report under section 207. The Oversight Board chair shall have no tie-breaking vote on Commission approval.

(c) **Prolonged impasse.** If a proposed bill has remained unapproved for 30 calendar days after an initial recorded vote, the Commission shall transmit the text, vote tally, and any minority views to the Oversight Board for inclusion in the report. The bill may thereafter be considered only as a Fallback Bill under Title IV, and shall not be deemed Commission-approved.

SEC. 204. TIMELINE

(a) Not later than 10 months after its first meeting, each Commission shall submit to both chambers a report describing its findings, hearings, public comments,

recorded votes, and legislative proposals. If a proposal satisfies section 203, the Commission shall transmit the corresponding Implementing Bill with the report.

(b) If no proposal is approved by the deadline, the Commission shall nevertheless submit the report, identifying proposals eligible for possible submission as Fallback Bills under Title IV. If the Commission fails to submit a report, the Oversight Board shall publish the available Commission findings and proposals as a substitute report, without deeming any proposal Commission-approved.

SEC. 205. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND COMMENT

(a) Each Commission shall conduct at least three public hearings and provide at least 60 calendar days for public comment on the selected Priority Issue and proposed reforms before final approval of an Implementing Bill.

(b) The required hearings shall be completed within six months after the Commission's first meeting. The 60-calendar-day public comment period shall be completed before final Commission approval of an Implementing Bill under section 203 and within the ten-month period established by section 204. A proposed Implementing Bill shall be made publicly available for comment sufficiently in advance of final approval to permit meaningful consideration of submissions.

(c) If a Commission fails to conduct required hearings, the Oversight Board shall conduct or arrange the remaining hearings and make the record available to the Commission and Congress; any failure to complete the statutory hearing and comment requirements shall be disclosed in the report and shall not itself constitute Commission approval.

SEC. 206. AMENDMENT WINDOW

(a) A Commission shall open a 10-calendar-day Amendment Window before its final vote. Any Member of Congress may submit a proposed amendment consistent with the Commission's findings; each submission and its disposition shall be publicly recorded.

(b) A proposed amendment to an Implementing Bill may be included in the final bill only if approved under section 203(a), including at least two affirmative votes from Legislative Members of each party.

(c) The Oversight Board shall administer the Amendment Window if the Commission fails to do so. In the case of a Fallback Bill, proposed amendments may be included in the text submitted for sponsorship under Title IV, but no amendment shall be eligible for floor consideration unless separately approved by the Commission under section 203(a).

SEC. 207. MINORITY REPORT

The Commission report shall include minority views; the full text of proposals not approved; proposed amendments accepted or rejected; and recorded votes on proposals and amendments. Minority submissions received by the Commission before the reporting deadline shall be included without substantive alteration.

TITLE III — EXPEDITED FLOOR PROCEDURES

SEC. 301. HOUSE PROCEDURES

(a) **Referral and discharge**. Upon certification under section 303(b), an Implementing Bill or eligible Fallback Bill shall be referred to the committee or committees of jurisdiction. If a committee does not report the bill within 30 calendar days after referral, it shall be automatically discharged. Periods when the House is adjourned for more than three consecutive calendar days shall not count toward this deadline.

(b) **Floor consideration**. The bill shall be placed on the House calendar and consideration shall begin not later than two legislative days after the last committee reports or is discharged.

(c) **Debate and amendments**. Debate shall not exceed 20 hours. Only amendments approved under section 203(a) before transmission shall be in order. No amendment shall be in order to a Fallback Bill unless so approved.

(d) **Final vote**. A motion to recommit shall not be in order. Upon expiration or yielding back of debate time and disposition of any permitted amendments, the House shall proceed without intervening motion to a recorded vote on passage; passage requires a simple majority of those voting, a quorum being present.

SEC. 302. SENATE PROCEDURES

(a) **Referral and discharge**. Upon certification under section 303(b), an Implementing Bill or eligible Fallback Bill shall be introduced and referred to the committee or committees of jurisdiction. If a committee does not report the bill within 30 calendar days after referral, it shall be automatically discharged. Periods when the Senate is adjourned for more than three consecutive calendar days shall not count toward this deadline.

(b) **Floor consideration**. Consideration shall begin not later than two legislative days after the last committee reports or is discharged, and any motion to proceed shall be nondebatable.

(c) **Debate and amendments**. Debate shall not exceed 20 hours. Only amendments approved under section 203(a) before transmission shall be in order. No amendment shall be in order to a Fallback Bill unless so approved.

(d) **Final vote**. Rule XXII shall not apply to consideration under this section. Upon expiration or yielding back of debate time and disposition of any permitted amendments, the Senate shall proceed without intervening motion to a recorded vote on passage; passage requires a simple majority of those voting, a quorum being present.

SEC. 303. BIPARTISAN SPONSORSHIP REQUIREMENT

(a) An implementing bill approved by a Commission pursuant to Section 203 shall qualify for expedited procedures under Sections 301 and 302 only if, upon introduction in each chamber, the bill is sponsored or co-sponsored by not fewer than five Members of the majority party and two Members of the minority party in that chamber. Fallback bills shall instead be governed by the sponsorship requirements of Title IV, subject to the certification requirements of subsection (b).

(b) Certification of compliance with the applicable sponsorship requirements of subsection (a) or Title IV shall be made by the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate, respectively.

(c) If the applicable bipartisan sponsorship requirements of subsection (a) or section 401(b) or (c) are not met in a chamber within 15 legislative days after formal transmission or submission of the bill to that chamber, expedited consideration shall lapse for that bill in that chamber. The Clerk or Secretary, as applicable, shall publish the date of transmission and the certification determination.

SEC. 304. EXERCISE OF CONGRESSIONAL RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

(a) **Rulemaking Authority**. Provisions of this Act governing the procedures of the House of Representatives and the Senate, including sections 201, 301, 302, 303, and 401, are enacted pursuant to the rulemaking power of each House under Article I, Section 5, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States, and shall be considered part of the rules of each House, respectively. Such provisions supersede other rules of that House only to the extent inconsistent therewith.

(b) **Constitutional Authority Preserved**. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit the constitutional authority of either House of Congress to change its rules at any time, in the same manner and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

TITLE IV — FALLBACK MECHANISM

SEC. 401. FALLBACK LEGISLATION

(a) **Trigger and Eligible Proposals.** If the Commission fails to approve an Implementing Bill within 10 months after its first meeting, any bill based on a legislative proposal identified in the Commission report or a substitute report issued under section 204(b) may be submitted as a Fallback Bill. In addition, any proposal transmitted to the Oversight Board following an impasse under section 203(c) shall become eligible for submission as a Fallback Bill immediately upon such transmission, without awaiting issuance of the Commission report or expiration of the 10-month period. A Fallback Bill shall not be deemed Commission-approved and shall qualify for expedited consideration only upon satisfaction of the applicable bipartisan sponsorship and certification requirements of this title and section 303.

(b) **House.** A Fallback Bill qualifies for expedited House procedures only if sponsored or co-sponsored by at least 25 Representatives, including at least two Members from each party.

(c) **Senate**. A Fallback Bill qualifies for expedited Senate procedures only if sponsored or co-sponsored by at least 10 Senators, including at least two Members from each party.

(d) **Certification and limits**. The Clerk and Secretary shall certify compliance under section 303(b). If the appropriate officer fails to act within five legislative days after submission of evidence of sponsorship, the Oversight Board may publish a nonbinding determination of eligibility; certification and enforcement of each chamber's procedures remain subject to that chamber's constitutional authority. Fallback Bills are subject to sections 301 and 302, including limitations on amendments, upon certification.

TITLE V — IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT

SEC. 501. IMPLEMENTATION

(a) An Implementing Bill may include statutory provisions, proposed administrative measures, and appropriations to the extent necessary and within Congress's constitutional authority. A Commission recommendation or Oversight Board directive shall not itself enact law, appropriate funds, or bind an executive agency.

(b) The Architect of the Capitol and the legislative branch agencies designated by the congressional leadership shall provide administrative support to Commissions and the Oversight Board, subject to amounts appropriated for that purpose. The Board may employ staff and obtain expert assistance within appropriated amounts.

SEC. 502. OVERSIGHT BOARD

(a) **Duties**. The Oversight Board shall monitor Commission deadlines, public hearings, transparency, reporting, and appointment of non-legislative experts; it may publish compliance reports and administer ministerial functions expressly assigned by this Act.

(b) **Composition and appointment**. The Board shall have five members. The Speaker of the House, House Minority Leader, Senate Majority Leader, and Senate Minority Leader shall each appoint one member; the Comptroller General shall appoint one member. Appointments shall be made not later than 30 calendar days after enactment or the convening of a new Congress. No more than three members may be affiliated with the same political party. Members shall serve for the Congress in which appointed and until successors qualify.

(c) **Organization and authority**. Three members constitute a quorum, and Board action requires three affirmative votes. The Board shall select its chair. It may issue administrative directions to Commissions to implement express duties under this Act but may not compel a vote of either chamber, waive a statutory sponsorship requirement, or exercise executive authority. Vacancies shall be filled by the original appointing authority.

(d) **Transparency**. The Board shall publish an annual report; minutes, decisions, appointment records, and procedural directives shall be publicly posted within 72 hours, except for material lawfully withheld under applicable law.

TITLE VI — SUNSET

SEC. 601. SUNSET

(a) **Duration.** Authority to establish new Commissions under this Act shall expire at the conclusion of the Congress immediately succeeding the Congress in which this Act is enacted, unless extended by an Act of Congress.

(b) **Pending Proceedings**. The expiration of authority under subsection (a) shall not terminate any Commission established before such expiration or affect the eligibility of any Implementing Bill or Fallback Bill submitted before expiration for expedited consideration, subject to the constitutional rulemaking authority of each House under section 304. Any such bill must be reintroduced in a succeeding Congress and satisfy the applicable requirements of this Act to receive expedited consideration in that Congress.