

December 11, 2017

Dear Representatives/ Senators:

We, the 38 undersigned organizations, endorse the bipartisan Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act (ACMRA), common-sense legislation that improves Congress's ability to oversee the Executive branch and provide needed governmental transparency.

ACMRA solves a significant problem: it establishes a central repository for agency reports submitted to Congress and tracks whether agencies have submitted the reports. Currently, congressional staff often are unaware of or have difficulty finding agency reports to Congress, especially when they are submitted to another committee or chamber. Reports often are lost or duplicated. In addition, while the reports could be made available to the public, they can be hard to find online and the FOIA request process is slow and costly.

ACMRA requires that any agency report that must be submitted to Congress and is releasable under the Freedom of Information Act will be published on a central website managed by the Government Publishing Office. The public-facing reports will become publicly available within 30 days of submission to Congress, and are subject to redaction under the FOIA rules should they contain classified or otherwise confidential material.

In addition, each year the Congressional Research Service, in consultation with the House and Senate, will create a list of all reports due to Congress, and GPO will compare the list of reports received from the agencies against the list compiled by CRS. This will tell us whether an agency has complied with its responsibilities and whether it have done so in a timely fashion.

The reports will be downloadable in bulk and submitted wherever possible in open data formats, which will allow the public and others to make full use of the information they contain, including building new services to increase their utility.

The Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act will help Congress work more effectively and efficiently as well as strengthen public understanding of governmental operations. We strongly endorse the legislation.

Sincerely yours,

American Association of Law Libraries
American Civil Liberties Union
American Library Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Association of Research Libraries
Bahr Law Offices, P.C.
Campaign for Accountability
Center for Data Innovation
Center for Responsive Politics
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Community Research
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress Action
Essential Information
Free Government Information
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
GovTrack.us
In the Public Interest
Issue One
Liberty Coalition
National Coalition for History
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Security Archive
National Security Counselors
National Taxpayers Union
OpenTheGovernment
Project on Government Oversight
Quorum
R Street Institute
Reclaim The Records
Rural Coalition
Sage Information Services
Society of Professional Journalists
SPARC
Sunlight Foundation
Union of Concerned Scientists
Washington Coalition for Open Government