



**American Governance Institute
Policy Proposals to Consider for Inclusion
in the FY 2027
Appropriations Bills**

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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH - CONGRESS-WIDE

Legislative Branch Generally

Legislative Branch Data Map and Congressional Data Management Plan

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *Joint Items*

Account:

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

In FY 2026, the Committee reiterated its direction to the House Clerk, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and the Sergeant at Arms (SAA) to develop a comprehensive map of data used by Congress, federal agencies, and the public to preserve and ensure access to the historical record of legislative action (H. Rept. 119-178, p. 7). In response, multiple House offices began collaborating—along with external stakeholders, including the Congressional Data Coalition—to initiate development of the data map.

To date, more than 120 datasets have been identified and cataloged. However, additional contributions and coordination are necessary to ensure the map is complete and authoritative. The Committee should reiterate its direction to data stewards across the House, Senate, and legislative branch support offices to contribute relevant datasets and metadata. The Committee should also encourage the House Digital Service, which is leading the project, to continue its collaboration with external stakeholders as the work progresses.

To maximize the utility of this effort, the Committee should clarify that the resulting map of congressional datasets is intended to be publicly available. Public availability will enhance discoverability, support institutional transparency, and improve coordination across legislative branch offices and with external users who rely on congressional data.

Report language:

Legislative Branch Data Map and Management Plan: The legislative branch creates and stewards invaluable data relied upon by Congress, federal agencies, and the public to preserve and access the historical record of legislative action. The Committee directs the House Clerk, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Sergeant at Arms (SAA), Government Publishing Office (GPO), Library of Congress (including CRS), Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and Government Accountability Office (GAO) to collaborate in developing and submitting to the Committee an updated, consolidated inventory of legislative branch datasets and existing data maps. This inventory shall also identify legislative branch datasets maintained or hosted outside of Congress.

To facilitate ongoing updating and maintenance, and in the interest of transparency, the Committee directs that the resulting data map be made publicly available through an appropriate legislative branch entity, such as the House Digital Service or Congressional Data Task Force.

Congressional Staff Directory Data

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *Senate: Salaries, Officers, and Employees*

Account: Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The absence of a comprehensive congressional staff directory covering the House, Senate, legislative support offices, and legislative branch agencies significantly impedes collaboration across the Legislative Branch. Without a centralized and reliable directory, staff face unnecessary barriers in identifying relevant counterparts and coordinating work across committees, chambers, and support entities.

Recognizing this gap, House Appropriators (H. Rept. 118-555, p. 11), Senate Appropriators (S. Rept. 118-192, p. 22), and the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress endorsed the creation of LegiDex—a Legislative Branch staff directory designed to enhance information exchange and improve collaboration. LegiDex is being developed by the House Digital Service. To date, the House of Representatives and two legislative branch support agencies are provided staff data, with additional entities expected to join.

Implementation in the Senate, however, has stalled due to questions regarding data ownership and authorization. Although significant staff data is maintained centrally by the Sergeant at Arms (SAA) and the Secretary of the Senate, some have taken the position that each individual Senate office must provide affirmative consent before staff information may be shared. In the absence of further direction, this interpretation has effectively halted progress.

To resolve this impasse, we recommend the following steps:

First, the Sergeant at Arms should be instructed to provide staff data for non-political offices, including employees of the SAA, the Secretary of the Senate, the Office of Legislative Counsel, and other legislative support entities.

Second, the Sergeant at Arms should be directed to lead a formal notification process informing each Senate office that staff directory information will be shared with LegiDex on an ongoing basis unless the office opts out within 30 days. This notification should clearly explain the operational and institutional benefits of a Legislative Branch-wide staff directory.

Thereafter, newly established offices should be presumed to consent to participation unless they affirmatively opt out within 30 days of notification.

This opt-out framework would respect office autonomy while enabling the Senate to participate meaningfully in a Legislative Branch-wide collaboration tool already endorsed by appropriators and reform bodies.

Report language:

Congressional Staff Directory Data. The Committee reiterates its support for the development of a comprehensive Legislative Branch staff directory, commonly referred to as LegiDex, to enhance collaboration, improve the exchange of information, and facilitate communication across the House, Senate, legislative support offices, and legislative branch agencies. The Committee recognizes the progress made to date and encourages continued expansion of participation across the Legislative Branch.

The Committee is aware that implementation within the Senate has been delayed while data ownership questions are resolved. The Committee directs the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate to provide to LegiDex staff directory data for non-political legislative support offices, including but not limited to employees of the Sergeant at Arms, the Secretary of the Senate, the Office of Legislative Counsel, and other Senate support entities.

The Sergeant at Arms shall also establish and administer a formal notification process under which each Senate office is informed that staff directory information will be shared with LegiDex on an ongoing basis unless the office affirmatively opts out within 30 days of such notice. The notification shall explain the operational and institutional benefits of participation in a Legislative Branch-wide staff directory. For newly established offices, participation shall be presumed unless the office opts out within 30 days of notification.

The Committee expects the Sergeant at Arms to provide an update on implementation progress not later than 90 days after the issuance of this report.

Digital Spreadsheet Of Appropriations Data

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Library of Congress

Account: Library of Congress / Congressional Research Service

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

Appropriations legislation provides an invaluable window into federal agencies' activities, priorities, and spending decisions. While appropriations measures and related tables are available through the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the detailed funding information contained in those bills is published primarily as prose and in PDF format. As a result, meaningful analysis of funding levels and trends requires manual extraction and re-entry of data into spreadsheets, creating unnecessary barriers to oversight and public understanding.

Appropriators, authorizers, and the public would benefit from publication of appropriations data as structured, machine-readable information, such as comma-separated values (CSV) files. CRS, which tracks and analyzes appropriations legislation, should publish a spreadsheet to accompany each appropriations measure containing detailed funding information in a tabular, electronic format. Such publication would enable review of spending trends, line by line, from FY 2000 forward.

To address this issue, Appropriators directed the Library of Congress to report in FY 2024, FY 2025, and FY 2026 on options for providing appropriations data for public access, and to provide a progress update in FY 2026 (S. Rpt. 117-60, p. 47; S. Rpt. 118-192, p. 51; S. Rpt. 119-38, p. 46).

At a time of constrained budgets and heightened scrutiny of federal spending, improved access to structured appropriations data would strengthen congressional oversight and institutional capacity. The Library of Congress, through CRS, should be directed to initiate this effort.

Report Language:

Access to Appropriations Data. Within 180 days of issuance of this report, the Committee directs the Library of Congress to provide comprehensive, timely, and user-friendly public access to a spreadsheet containing the funding level for each line item in appropriations legislation passed by the House of Representatives, passed by the Senate, and enacted into law.

The spreadsheet shall include data from FY 2020 to the present and include a plan to incorporate data back to FY 2000. The information shall be updated on a timely basis for each fiscal year and upon enactment of supplemental appropriations legislation.

The Committee encourages the Library to consult with external stakeholders regarding the content and format of the spreadsheet. When feasible, the Library is further encouraged to include draft line-item funding levels for appropriations legislation reported by subcommittees and by full committees in both chambers.

House and Senate on Co-Development of Technology

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *Joint Items*

Account:

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

In FY 2025, appropriators encouraged the Senate Sergeant at Arms (SAA) to work more closely with the House of Representatives on the co-development of future modernization technology tools (S. Rept. 118-192, p. 24). In FY 2026, the Senate SAA was again directed to collaborate more closely with the House and to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) governing shared technology development and enhancement (S. Rept. 119-38, p. 22). These directives reflect the Committee's continued commitment to thoughtful modernization and cross-chamber coordination.

Building on this progress, the House Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Office of the House Clerk, Senate Sergeant at Arms, and Secretary of the Senate should be directed to complete and maintain a bicameral MOU enabling the two chambers to collaborate on the co-development of bespoke technology tools that strengthen congressional capacity, ensure operational continuity, and improve service to Members and the public. Development and implementation of such an agreement should occur in consultation with relevant authorizing and appropriations stakeholders.

Report language:

Co-Development of Legislative Branch Technology: The Senate Sergeant at Arms (SAA), the Secretary of the Senate, the House Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and the House Clerk are encouraged to work more closely together on the co-development of future modernization technology tools to increase congressional capacity, ensure operational continuity, and improve customer service to the American people. The Senate SAA shall update Senate Appropriators, and the House CAO shall update House Appropriators, within 30 days of issuance of this report on the status of adoption of a memorandum of understanding governing shared technology development and enhancement.

Legislative Branch Technology Project Map

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *Salaries, Officers, and Employees*

Account: *Office of the Clerk*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

Recent developments have illustrated that entities across the legislative branch are independently developing technology to address legislative and operational challenges. However, even within the legislative branch, awareness of these tools is often limited. This lack of visibility can result in duplication of effort and missed opportunities to reduce costs and share technical expertise.

The ongoing effort to encourage the Senate Sergeant at Arms and the House Clerk, among others, to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the co-development of new technology tools is an important and constructive step toward greater coordination. At the same time, technology projects continue to be created within leadership offices, party organizations, committees, personal offices, and institutional support offices and agencies.

Greater transparency regarding existing technology initiatives would benefit legislative branch entities and external stakeholders alike. An inventory of legislative branch technology projects would help identify opportunities for collaboration, reuse, and cost savings. Comparable efforts in other parliamentary bodies—such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s publicly available inventory of artificial intelligence use cases—demonstrate how shared visibility into technology initiatives can facilitate modernization and knowledge transfer while driving down costs.

In addition, civil society organizations frequently develop technology tools that are used or incorporated into legislative branch processes. Maintaining a publicly available inventory of congressional technology projects, particularly those related to congressional data, would strengthen institutional capacity and help ensure that resources are deployed efficiently. The Congressional Data Task Force is a suitable venue to create and update such a dataset.

Report language:

Legislative Branch Technology Project Map: Entities across the legislative branch create or sponsor the development of technology projects related to legislative data and congressional operations, but the existence of these projects is not widely known, even within Congress. As a result, potential efficiencies that could arise from knowledge-sharing and technology reuse may be overlooked.

The Congressional Data Task Force is directed to oversee the creation of a continuously updated Legislative Branch Technology Project Map that inventories tools developed within and outside the legislative branch relating to the management of legislative data and congressional operations. To facilitate updating and maintenance of this dataset, and in the interest of transparency, the project map shall be made publicly available via the CDTF.

Legislative Branch Childcare

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Joint Items

Account: Salaries and Expenses

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

The Legislative branch serves as both the steward of American democracy and a workplace community for thousands of employees, many of whom are parents balancing family and professional obligations. While some Legislative branch support components—such as the House of Representatives, the Senate, the Library of Congress, and Government Accountability Office—have established childcare centers, demand dramatically exceeds supply, with waitlists stretching years. This gap in services presents significant difficulties for staff working inside the Legislative branch.

Appropriators have taken steps in recent years to address this issue. The committee report accompanying the Senate FY 2026 appropriations bill recognized that "the child care requirements of the legislative branch entities far exceeds the capacity of established child care services within the branch." (S. Rept. 119-38, p. 8). The committee report accompanying the House Legislative Branch Appropriations bill in FY 2025 directed the CAO to expedite the hiring of faculty for the House Child Care Center in light of a three-year waiting list. In addition, the Senate directed the AOC to refresh a study into the Senate Child Care Center regarding expanding the facility and its management.

Recent efforts highlight the need for a broader review. Child care availability across the Legislative branch remains an important issue. Moreover, basic family amenities, such as diaper-changing tables in public restrooms, are inconsistently available across Congressional buildings, impacting millions of annual visitors.

Congressional work demands long, irregular hours, and a modern Legislative branch must meet the needs of its employees to maintain institutional strength. To do so effectively, there must be a comprehensive understanding of what family support services exist, how they are being used, and where deficiencies remain.

The Government Accountability Office should be directed to conduct a branch-wide review of employee family support services, in consultation with the Architect of the Capitol, the CAO, and the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and relevant staff at various support offices and agencies. This assessment should identify existing resources, evaluate usage rates, highlight service gaps, and provide actionable recommendations to ensure the Legislative branch remains a competitive, supportive employer.

Report Language:

Legislative Branch Child Care Services. Congress has made important strides in recent years to expand support for federal employees who are parents of young children and to better

accommodate the millions of visitors to the Capitol complex. However, further action is needed to address years-long waitlists at child care facilities, insufficient availability of lactation rooms, inconsistent access to child changing tables, and related deficiencies.

The Committee directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a Legislative Branch-wide review of child care and family support services available across the House, Senate, and Legislative Branch support offices and agencies. This review shall include an assessment of service availability, utilization rates, identified gaps, and administrative challenges. The GAO shall identify where additional services are needed, recommend next steps, designate appropriate responsible entities, and suggest strategies for more effective and efficient administration of these services across the Legislative Branch.

The GAO shall incorporate findings from existing studies conducted by the Architect of the Capitol, the Chief Administrative Officer, and other relevant entities, and shall consult with staff and administrators responsible for managing child care and family support services. The GAO shall provide its report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, the Committee on House Administration, the Senate Rules Committee, and publish its findings online within 240 days of the issuance of this report.

Legislative Branch Jobs Portal

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Joint Items

Account: Salaries and Expenses

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

The Legislative branch is home to thousands of professional opportunities spanning a wide range of skills, disciplines, and experiences. These positions—across the House of Representatives, Senate, and Legislative Branch support offices and agencies—are vital to the daily operations of the First Branch of government and the fulfillment of its constitutional responsibilities. Yet despite the breadth and importance of these roles, there is no centralized system for publicizing or accessing Legislative branch job opportunities. Each entity independently posts job openings through different mechanisms: some circulate PDF notices via email lists, others maintain limited online databases, and some post positions on external sites like USAJobs.gov. The absence of a unified portal significantly hinders public access, frustrates job seekers, and impedes efforts to recruit a broad and diverse applicant pool.

A centralized Legislative branch jobs portal would promote transparency, efficiency, and equity in hiring. Consolidating all publicly available job announcements into a structured, searchable, and user-friendly platform would make it significantly easier for applicants to identify openings, compare opportunities across entities, and subscribe to timely alerts tailored to their areas of interest. This would not only enhance public understanding of careers in the Legislative branch but would also reduce duplication of effort across agencies, modernize hiring practices, and help Congress attract the best and most diverse talent to serve the American people.

To advance this effort, the Committee directs the Chief Administrative Officer of the House and the Senate Sergeant at Arms to convene a working group composed of representatives from House and Senate offices, support offices, and support agencies. This group shall assess the current processes for publishing job opportunities, identify best practices, develop recommendations for a centralized jobs portal, and outline the technical and administrative requirements for its implementation. The working group shall report its findings and recommendations to the Committee on Appropriations, the House Administration Committee, the Senate Rules Committee, and make that report publicly available within 180 days of the issuance of this report. In our view, it is likely that the data published by these entities is sufficient to support the creation of a central, automated portal that publishes all the information in one place.

Report language:

Legislative Branch Jobs Portal. The Legislative Branch currently lacks a centralized system for publicizing job opportunities across the House, Senate, and Legislative Branch support offices and agencies. Job postings are published inconsistently across various platforms, including PDFs distributed by email, individual online databases, and USAJobs.gov, making it difficult for jobseekers to find and apply to available positions.

The Committee directs the Chief Administrative Officer of the House and the Senate Sergeant at Arms to convene a working group, with participation from support offices and Legislative Branch agencies, as well as the Congressional Data Task Force, to assess existing practices for posting job vacancies and develop recommendations for creating a centralized Legislative Branch jobs portal. The portal should consolidate all publicly available job postings in a structured, searchable, and user-friendly format, and support subscription-based alerts for new postings. Consideration should be given for extensibility so that it can receive applications and filter them to the relevant hiring authority.

The working group shall report its findings and recommendations to the Committee on Appropriations, the Committee on House Administration, the Senate Rules Committee, and to the public within 180 days of the issuance of this report.

Library of Congress

Appropriations Bills and Committee Reports on Congress.gov

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Congressional Research Service

Account: Salaries and Expenses

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

Information about the appropriations process is critical to the effective functioning of Congress, the Executive Branch, and public stakeholders. Appropriations decisions determine how federal resources are allocated, and timely access to legislative materials—including bill text, committee reports, and vote records—is essential for informed decision-making, oversight, and public accountability. Given the pace at which appropriations subcommittees often act, access to official documents at the earliest possible moment is vital. Delays in obtaining bill text or report language can impair the ability of Members, staff, agencies, and the public to engage meaningfully as legislation advances through key stages of the process.

The Library of Congress, through the Congressional Research Service (CRS), provides an important service by publishing appropriations status tables. These tables identify appropriations bills introduced in the House and Senate, track legislative actions at each stage, and include links to bill text and accompanying report language. However, CRS's current process includes links only after materials have been transmitted to and published by the Government Publishing Office (GPO). In practice, documents are often not sent to GPO until after full committee approval. As a result, CRS status tables may not include bill text or reports at earlier stages—such as subcommittee or full committee consideration—precisely when timely access is most important.

Appropriations materials are routinely made publicly available by the Appropriations Committees as they are considered, including prior to subcommittee markups and full committee votes. To better meet the needs of Congress and the public, CRS should monitor official appropriations announcements and committee websites and update its appropriations status tables promptly with links to bill text and report language as soon as those materials are publicly released by the committees. Because Congress.gov serves as the central platform relied upon by Members, staff, agencies, and the public to track legislative developments, ensuring that publicly released appropriations materials are reflected there without delay would significantly enhance transparency, responsiveness, and usability across the legislative process.

Report Language:

Appropriations Status Table Updates. The Committee commends the Congressional Research Service (CRS) for its work in maintaining the Appropriations Status Table, which provides an important resource by tracking the progress of appropriations legislation and linking to relevant bill text and report language. To further enhance its utility, the Committee directs CRS to incorporate links to appropriations materials at the earliest point they are publicly released by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, including materials released before subcommittee or full committee proceedings, rather than waiting for publication by the Government Publishing

Office (GPO). CRS shall monitor official appropriations announcements and committee websites to ensure that the Appropriations Status Table reflects the most current publicly available information, thereby maximizing the timeliness and usefulness of the resource for congressional users and the public. CRS shall update links as official GPO versions become available.

Reports On LC Public Forums and Improving Congress.gov

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Library of Congress

Account: Salaries and Expenses

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

On page 46 of the Senate report accompanying the FY2026 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, the Committee reaffirmed the importance of Congress.gov and directed the Library of Congress to provide updates on enhancements and to brief the relevant committees regarding continuing challenges and recommended solutions. We welcome this continued oversight and the Library's sustained work to improve Congress.gov.

The Committee has also emphasized the value of the Library's public forums as a structured mechanism for receiving stakeholder input on legislative information services. It reiterated its direction to the Library to hold an annual public forum, regularly present at Congressional Data Task Force meetings, and—following each forum—prepare a report summarizing comments and suggestions, identifying which could be implemented by the Library versus other entities, estimating costs and effort where possible, and providing its evaluation and recommendations. That report is to be made publicly available on the Library's website, and the Library is authorized to discuss its recommendations publicly.

At the December 2025 Congressional Data Task Force meeting, the Library indicated that it would release the Congress.gov Update Study, which identified challenges and potential enhancements to Congress.gov. As of March 1, 2026—approximately six months after the September forum—that report has not been made public. To date, no Congress.gov Update report has been publicly released by the Library.

In its non-public 2023 Congress.gov Update report, the Library explicitly sought approval to release prior Public Forum Reports (2020 and 2021) and the Congress.gov Strategic Objective Report, as well as future reports of this nature. In other words, as early as 2023, the Library expressed support for making these materials public.

The Committee's report language contemplates transparency about both user recommendations and the practical constraints on implementation—including dependencies on House, Senate, and GPO systems and competing IT workloads. Public release of the Congress.gov Update Study and prior related reports would directly advance that objective.

We therefore respectfully urge the Committee to reiterate its direction and explicitly authorize—and direct—the Library to release past Congress.gov Update reports and to require that future reports be made publicly available within three months of each forum. The Library should also be encouraged to act expeditiously and to provide detailed discussion of public recommendations, including feasibility, costs, and institutional dependencies. Greater

transparency will strengthen oversight, inform modernization efforts, and better serve Members, staff, and the public.

Report Language:

Reports on Congress.gov. The Committee commends the Library of Congress for its continued engagement with stakeholders through the annual Congress.gov Public Forums and expects the Library to continue convening these forums to facilitate structured public input into its legislative information services.

Following each Congress.gov Public Forum, the Library shall prepare a report to be submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and to relevant authorizing committees and officers of the House and Senate, and shall make such report publicly available on the Library's website no later than 60 days after the forum. Moreover, the Congress.gov Update reports from FY2023 onward shall be published on the Library's website within 30 days of the issuance of this report.

The Congress.gov Update reports shall summarize the comments and suggestions received at the Congress.gov Public Forum; identify and explain in detail which recommendations can be implemented by the Library and which would require action by other legislative branch entities; assess whether there are actions the Library could undertake that would obviate reliance on other legislative branch entities to accomplish tasks requested by the public; provide rough estimates of cost and effort where possible; and set forth the Library's evaluation and recommendations for further action. The Library is authorized to discuss its recommendations with the public.

Member Access To Congressional Research Service Reports

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Congressional Research Service

Account: Salaries and Expenses

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports provide invaluable, nonpartisan, and non-confidential information to inform policy deliberations before Congress. Historical CRS reports contain analysis relevant to ongoing public debates, provide important context on existing laws, and serve as a reference for CRS staff when responding to Member inquiries or preparing new or updated products.

It has long been CRS policy to provide its non-confidential reports to Members of Congress upon request. Supporting Congress in this manner is a core function of CRS. Many historical reports remain relevant to issues currently before Congress.

CRS maintains an internal archive of historical reports, known as CRSX, which contains approximately 30,000 reports. That archive, however, is not directly accessible to Members of Congress. In addition, there is no comprehensive Congress-facing or publicly available list of CRS reports produced since the agency's reorganization in 1970. As a result, Members may not be aware of the existence of relevant historical reports. These reports are frequently cited in committee reports, academic scholarship, floor statements, and news articles. Many are also available through non-Congressional repositories, sometimes for a fee.

This approach contrasts with that of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and the former Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), all of which have made their current and historical reports publicly available online.

Recently, CRS declined to provide a subset of historical reports in response to a request from a Member of Congress. The issue was not the agency's technical ability to provide the reports, but a determination not to fulfill the request. The Member ultimately obtained a portion of the requested materials through a non-Congressional repository. This circumstance underscores the need for clear policy direction to ensure Members have reliable access to CRS's non-confidential work product.

Since its founding, non-confidential CRS reports have been available to Members for their official use upon request. CRS should be directed to comply with this policy and provide non-confidential reports to Members upon request, whether individually or in bulk. In addition, CRS should take appropriate steps to inform Members of the full range of non-confidential reports in its holdings.

Report Language:

Congressional Research Service Reports. The Committee directs the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to provide copies of its non-confidential reports to any Member of Congress upon request, without limitation as to the number or scope of reports requested. The Committee further directs CRS, within 180 days of the issuance of this report, to publish on Congress.gov a comprehensive list of all non-confidential reports issued by the agency from 1970 to the present, including sufficient identifying information to enable Members to request specific reports.

Government Accountability Office

Notification of GAO Restricted Reports

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *Government Accountability Office*

Account: *Salaries and Expenses*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The Government Accountability Office has published on its website a list of titles of its “restricted reports” since October 2015. The content of the reports are restricted because they contain classified information or controlled unclassified information. The titles are published because, according to GAO, “this list is intended to keep Congress, federal agencies, and the public informed of the existence of these products.”

According to Steven Aftergood, who wrote about the publication effort at the time for his *Secrecy News* newsletter, “the move was prompted by concerns expressed by some Members of Congress and staff that they were unaware of the restricted reports, since they had not been indexed or archived by GAO.”

GAO provides a number of ways for congressional staff and the public to learn about when GAO publications are posted on its website. This includes the ability to subscribe to email updates and to subscribe to RSS feeds for when new reports are issued. However, GAO does not currently provide the ability for an individual to receive an email update or RSS feed alert when a new restricted report is added to the website.

GAO should provide the capability for staff and the public to receive notices by email and RSS when new reports are published.

Report language:

Notification of GAO Restricted Reports. Since 2015, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has published the titles of restricted reports on its website to keep Congress, federal agencies, and the public informed of the existence of these products. In furtherance of this laudable goal, GAO is directed to update its website within 180 days of the issuance of this report to allow individuals to receive email alerts and follow an RSS feed concerning the issuance of new restricted reports.

Expand The List of GAO Restricted Reports

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *Government Accountability Office*

Account: *Salaries and Expenses*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The Government Accountability Office has published on its website a list of titles of its “restricted reports” since October 2015. The content of the reports are restricted because they contain classified information or controlled unclassified information. The titles are published because, according to GAO, “this list is intended to keep Congress, federal agencies, and the public informed of the existence of these products.”

According to Steven Aftergood, who wrote about the publication effort at the time for his *Secrecy News* newsletter, “the move was prompted by concerns expressed by some Members of Congress and staff that they were unaware of the restricted reports, since they had not been indexed or archived by GAO.”

The list of reports is not complete, however. Among other things, it does not include restricted GAO reports prior to 2014.

GAO was requested to publish reports prior to 2014, but they said they could not generate such a list. However, in response to a FOIA-like request, GAO provided the Government Attic a list of restricted reports from 1971-2011, available at https://www.governmentattic.org/5docs/GAO-RestrictedReportsDB_2011.pdf. GAO also provided the Government Attic the first page of every GAO report issued prior to 1972.

Congress and the public should be aware of the existence of restricted reports, including those issued prior to 2015, because they can serve as a finding aid for members of Congress to discover agency patterns of practices of behavior and otherwise inform the oversight process. They also can provide ideas for new reports to request from the agency. As GAO already has an internal list of restricted reports from 1971-2011, it should update its website with a list of all restricted reports between 1971-2014.

Report language:

GAO Restricted Reports. Since 2015, the Government Accountability Office has published the titles of restricted reports on its website to keep Congress, federal agencies, and the public informed of the existence of these products. In furtherance of this laudable goal, and in light of the evergreen nature of many of its products, GAO is directed to update its website within 90 days of the issuance of this report to contain the titles of restricted reports from 1971-2015, drawing as appropriate from the list GAO created in 2011.

Exploring a New Approach to GAO Funding

Appropriations subcommittee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *Government Accountability Office*

Account: *Salaries and Expenses*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) provides significant financial benefits to the federal government — returning an average of \$133 in savings for every dollar invested over the last six years. Nevertheless, GAO’s funding levels and personnel numbers are significantly lower than historical norms, costing the federal government billions of dollars compared to a higher baseline spending level for the watchdog agency.

The comparative underfunding of GAO may be due in part to its current funding mechanism. While GAO benefits the entire federal government, it is funded through the Legislative Branch Appropriations Committee whose 302(b) allocations over the decades have increased at half the rate of other non-defense discretionary spending. In addition, the lion’s share of new funding in the Legislative Branch has gone towards the U.S. Capitol Police and the Architect of the Capitol, leaving little in new funding for the operations of the rest of the Legislative branch, including GAO.

Funding for GAO should scale with the size of the federal government. GAO is funded at a level that is approximately 0.045% of federal discretionary spending. By comparison, in FY 1992 GAO received 0.082% of federal discretionary spending.

The GAO should be tasked with reviewing funding models for GAO-like entities in the states and around the world as well as surveying federal agencies inside the United States to identify arrangements for Congress to consider that would address funding shortfalls for the agency while ensuring proper oversight by the Legislative Branch Appropriations committee.

Report language:

Study on GAO Funding Models. The Government Accountability Office plays a significant role in identifying and promoting the reduction of government waste, fraud, and abuse. There is concern that constraining GAO’s funding levels over the years has significantly reduced the waste, fraud, and abuse GAO has been capable of addressing, resulting in billions of lost or wasted tax dollars.

The GAO is directed to submit to this committee and to make publicly available a report on alternative funding models for the GAO that provide additional support for the agency’s activities and provide for it to be funded in proper and steady proportion to the size of the government. In conducting the study, GAO should examine comparable agencies around the world and in the states, and look to alternative funding models for federal agencies. The study should be submitted within 180 days of the issuance of this report and published on GAO’s website.

Security and Safety

Tracking Threats to Congress

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *US Capitol Police*

Account: *Salaries*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The United States Capitol Police (USCP) plays a critical role in protecting Members of Congress, their families, and staff from threats and acts of violence. On an annual basis since 2020, the USCP has published the total number of threat assessment cases it has investigated. For example, USCP identified 8,008 concerning statements and direct threats in 2023, 9,474 in 2024, and 14,938 in 2025.

While these aggregate figures demonstrate a rising volume of threats, they lack important context. In April 2025, then-Chief J. Thomas Manger testified that the number of credible threats requiring significant investigation was “in the hundreds,” but precise figures have not been publicly released. Nor has comprehensive data been provided regarding how many cases result in referral for prosecution, formal charges, or convictions.

Greater visibility into these metrics, including data from 2020 forward, would provide Members with a clearer understanding of the nature and severity of the threat environment. A more detailed public accounting of threat trends and investigative outcomes would enhance transparency and better inform congressional decisions regarding security policy, oversight, and resource allocation for the protection of the Legislative Branch.

Report language:

Tracking Threats to Congress. The Committee commends the United States Capitol Police (USCP) for its continued efforts to protect Members of Congress, their families, and staff. Not later than 90 days after issuance of this report, the USCP shall update its public-facing threat assessment reporting to include, beginning with calendar year 2026 and annually thereafter, the number of threats deemed credible, the number of individuals referred for prosecution, and the number of prosecutions resulting in convictions. To the extent such data are available, the USCP shall also update its published reporting for calendar years 2020 through 2025 to include the number of threats determined to be credible.

Study to Address United States Capitol Police Funding

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *US Capitol Police*

Account: *Salaries*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

Over the last few decades, funding levels for the Capitol Police have increased five fold. In addition, an increasing percentage of the work performed by the U.S. Capitol Police relate to matters of national defense and intelligence. They do not just police the Capitol grounds, but provide a line of defense for Members of Congress against foreign adversaries, hardening facilities, and protecting soft targets.

In part because of their increased responsibilities, funding for the Capitol Police has grown at an accelerated rate, significantly exceeding the growth rate of the federal government and the Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. This also has outstripped the allocation provided to the Legislative branch, which almost entirely comes from 302(a) non-defense appropriated funds and has grown at half the rate of non-defense appropriations spending over the last few decades.

To avoid a shortfall to the Capitol Police or for Legislative branch functions, and to more equitably distribute costs inside the Legislative branch, Congress should direct the Government Accountability Office to study funding mechanisms for the USCP. They should analyze and make recommendations on where the USCP should draw their funds, including a review of whether it is appropriate to draw funds from defense discretionary appropriations as well as non-defense discretionary appropriations, and possibly from mandatory spending as well.

Report language:

Study on United States Capitol Police Funding. Within 180 days of the issuance of this report, the Government Accountability Office shall evaluate possible funding mechanisms for the U.S. Capitol Police that address its disproportionately growing funding needs and the nature of its work, and make recommendations as to alternate sources of funding for the USCP that respect the equities of the legislative branch.

Dedicated United States Capitol Police Board Staff

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *U. S. Capitol Police*

Account: *Salaries and Expenses*

Type of Request: Bill Text

Background:

The United States Capitol Police (USCP) employs approximately 2,350 officers and several hundred additional personnel, yet the United States Capitol Police Board—the body responsible for its oversight—has only one dedicated staff member.

Given the size, complexity, and security mission of the USCP, strengthening oversight capacity at both the Board and committee levels is warranted. In questions for the record following a 118th Congress joint oversight hearing (S. Hrg. 118-62), each member of the Capitol Police Board supported additional staff. Then–Architect of the Capitol Rexroat endorsed five additional positions, including a staff director and general counsel (p. 894). Then–Secretary of the Senate Gibson supported providing the Board with dedicated staff (p. 879). House Sergeant at Arms McFarland acknowledged the need for additional staff while raising concerns about lines of responsibility (p. 890). USCP Chief Manger also testified that the Board would benefit from additional full-time personnel, with specific roles to be determined by Board members (p. 908). External reviews, including by the Government Accountability Office, have likewise raised oversight capacity concerns.

Accordingly, a portion of funds provided to the Capitol Police should be dedicated for three full-time staff positions dedicated solely to supporting the Capitol Police Board.

Bill text:

United States Capitol Police Safety Officers. Further, sufficient funds for 3 FTEs to solely support the U.S. Capitol Police Board, and to be hired by the same, shall be drawn from this account.

Capitol Police Public Records Request Regulations

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: U. S. Capitol Police

Account: General Expenses

Type of Request: Bill Text

Background:

We commend the Appropriations Committee's efforts to increase U.S. Capitol Police transparency in committee report language captioned "USCP Information Sharing" accompanying the enacted FY 2021 appropriations bill (H. Rept. 116-447, p. 23) and the House-passed FY 2022 appropriations bill (H. Rept. 117-80, p. 26). The FY 2022 language states:

"USCP Information Sharing: While the USCP is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 552), the Committee encourages the USCP to develop a policy and procedure for the sharing of information that follows the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act. This policy should be consistent with, and not interfere with, USCP's primary function of protecting the Congress."

The Capitol Police promulgated a public availability of records policy dated February 1, 2024, and posted online on March 5, 2024. They did not consult with the public or experts on FOIA on drafting such a policy nor inform the public this policy existed except by publishing on their webpage. Demand Progress Education Fund conducted its own consultation with FOIA and congressional experts and released *Model Public Records Request Regulations for the U.S. Capitol Police* in December 2021, drawing heavily from comparable regulations issued by the Government Accountability Office and the Library of Congress.

The original congressional direction to create a FOIA-like policy predates the events of January 6th, 2021 and was originally requested by Demand Progress because transparency and accountability are essential components of reform and a modernized security force.

The policy promulgated by the Capitol Police does not follow the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act. For example, a recent request for responses provided by the USCP to these public records requests was denied on the basis that it would invade "the personal privacy of another individual or entity." By definition, records released in response to a public records request are public and can be released. In addition, the Capitol Police are not keeping a log of public records requests. These practices, and the narrowly drafted language of the policy, suggests that it will be nearly impossible to obtain any records through this process.

We urge the committee to direct the Capitol Police to re-issue this policy within 180 days after first consulting with civil society, governmental FOIA experts, and peer congressional agencies, then providing an opportunity for feedback on the regulations once drafted and prior to issuance;

and after reviewing and incorporating the Model Public Records Request Regulations issued by Demand Progress Education Fund.

Bill Text:

USCP Information Sharing. As part of the Legislative Branch Appropriations bill for FY 2022, the Committee encouraged the U.S Capitol Police “to develop a policy and procedure for the sharing of information that follows the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act. This policy should be consistent with, and not interfere with, USCP’s primary function of protecting the Congress.” The Capitol Police issued a public records policy dated February 1, 2024, that does not follow the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act and was promulgated without consultation with civil society, reference to other Legislative branch agency regulations, or the recommendations made by Demand Progress.

Within 180 days of the issuance of this report, the USCP/Board shall re-issue public access regulations to follow the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act and draw significant inspiration from Demand Progress Education Fund’s model Public Records Request Regulations. Whenever feasible, the USCP should proactively disclose information that is or is likely to be of interest to the public and not wait for an information request.

In accomplishing the task of drafting regulations, the USCP/Board shall consult with civil society, governmental FOIA experts, and peer congressional agencies during the process of drafting the regulations and provide a draft of the regulations for their comments prior to its issuance. A detailed summary of the comments and the draft regulations shall also be provided to appropriators and the relevant committees. The USCP shall take comments from all stakeholders into consideration when promulgating the final regulations.

The public records request regulations are intended to facilitate and maximize the sharing of information held by the U.S. Capitol Police Board, the U.S. Capitol Police, and the U.S. Capitol Police Inspector General in a fashion that follows the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act, which is focused on maximizing public access to information. The draft regulations should be consistent with USCP’s primary function of protecting the Congress, keeping in mind that public transparency and accountability are an essential feedback mechanism for the USCP/Board and that any concerns about public availability must be grounded in specific articulable facts and not mere speculation of harm, and that embarrassment of the USCP/Board is not a proper basis for withholding information.

As part of the policy, the Capitol Police shall keep a log of all requests and their disposition, and records that are released to the public shall also be published on the USCP website.

No less than every four years thereafter, or more frequently as appropriate, the Capitol Police Board will review and update its records request regulations through a drafting and consultation process similar to that outlined above. In doing so, it shall take into account recent changes in the Freedom of Information Act, the importance of proactive disclosure of information, and public input.

Strengthening US Capitol Police Inspector General Independence

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: U.S. Capitol Police

Accounts: General Expenses

Type of Request: Bill Text and Report Language

The U.S. Capitol Police Office of the Inspector General (USCP IG) is responsible for providing independent, professional, and nonpartisan oversight of the U.S. Capitol Police (USCP). However, the IG's jurisdiction does not extend to the Capitol Police Board, which comprises the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms, the Architect of the Capitol, and, ex officio, the USCP Chief. The IG is appointed by the Board, and serves a five year term, with appointment possible for two additional terms. Both the Board and the Chief report directly to congressional oversight and appropriations committees.

In recent years, serious operational shortcomings have been identified within the USCP, including issues involving the Board. Given the close integration between the two entities, independent oversight of the entire Capitol Police structure—including its Board—is essential. Moreover, best practices dictate that Inspectors General should be fully independent from the bodies they oversee. Yet under current law, the Board retains authority to appoint and remove the USCP IG.

To strengthen oversight and ensure greater structural independence, the appointment and removal process for the USCP IG should be reformed.

We recommend that the USCP IG be appointed by the Comptroller General of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) for a renewable five-year term, following consultation with the bipartisan leadership of both chambers in addition to relevant Legislative branch inspectors general. The GAO, as an independent legislative branch watchdog, is well-positioned to make such appointments. In addition, the IG's jurisdiction should be expanded to include oversight of the Capitol Police Board. These changes would help insulate the IG from undue influence by the USCP or its Board.

We also recommend that the IG be removable only for cause by the Comptroller General, or via a joint resolution of Congress. A renewable term allows for performance evaluation and accountability, while removal for cause ensures protection against corruption, misconduct, or inefficiency. Providing for removal by joint resolution offers a safeguard in cases where the IG no longer commands the confidence of Congress.

Finally, we recommend the IG be able to receive complaints from any person.

Report language:

Strengthening the U.S. Capitol Police Inspector General. The Committee recognizes the essential role of the U.S. Capitol Police Office of the Inspector General (USCP IG) in delivering

professional, independent, and nonpartisan oversight of the U.S. Capitol Police. To further strengthen transparency and accountability, the Committee supports enhancing the IG's independence and effectiveness in line with best practices across the federal government.

The Committee recommends expanding the IG's mandate to include oversight of the Capitol Police Board, thereby providing more comprehensive review of the full structure and operations of the Capitol Police. To bolster the IG's independence and institutional credibility, the Committee supports updating the appointment process so that the USCP IG is appointed by the Comptroller General of the United States, following consultation with bipartisan leadership in both chambers of Congress and relevant Legislative branch Inspectors General.

To ensure sustained accountability, the Committee also recommends vesting removal authority vested in the Comptroller General for cause, or through joint resolution of Congress. These reforms will help ensure rigorous, impartial oversight of the Capitol Police while enhancing confidence in the institution's ability to serve the Congress and the public effectively.

Finally, the Committee recommends expanding the capability of the IG to receive complaints to extend to any person.

Bill text:

Section 1909(b)(1) of title 2, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(1) Appointment.—The Inspector General shall be appointed by the Comptroller General of the United States, after consultation with the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate as well as the Inspectors General of the Library of Congress, Government Publishing Office, and Government Accountability Office. The appointment shall be made without regard to political affiliation and solely on the basis of integrity and demonstrated ability in accounting, auditing, financial analysis, law, management analysis, public administration, or investigations.”

Section 1909(b)(3) of title 2, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(3) Removal.—The Inspector General may be removed from office before the expiration of the term only—

(A) for cause by the Comptroller General of the United States; or

(B) by a joint resolution of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The Comptroller General shall communicate the reason for any such removal to the Committee on House Administration, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate.”

Section 1909(c)(3)(A) of title 2, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(A) Authority. The Inspector General may receive and investigate complaints or information from any person, including an employee or member of the Capitol Police or the Capitol Police Board, concerning the possible existence of an activity constituting a violation of law, rules, or regulations, or mismanagement, gross waste of funds, abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety, including complaints or information the investigation of which is under the jurisdiction of the Internal Affairs Division of the Capitol Police as of August 2, 2005."

Section 1909(d)(1) of title 2, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(1) In General. The Inspector General may exercise the same authorities with respect to the United States Capitol Police and the United States Capitol Police Board as an Inspector General of an establishment may exercise with respect to an establishment under section 406(a) of title 5, under the same terms and conditions which apply under such section."

Operational Efficiency

Inspectors General and the GPO

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Government Publishing Office

Accounts: Public Information Programs of the Superintendent of Documents

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

Inspectors General (IGs) are central to oversight of the Executive branch. The official public portal for Inspector General reports is Oversight.gov, operated by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE). Oversight.gov aggregates reports across agencies and serves as the primary government-wide access point for IG findings.

While Oversight.gov has significantly improved transparency, its funding structure is vulnerable to disruption and it relies upon executive branch infrastructure. IG offices also rely on their parent agencies for IT systems and website hosting, which creates instability for those offices in their individual capacities. Given the importance of individual IGs as well as Oversight.gov to inform Congress's understanding of agency activities, this reliance presents a potential vulnerability.

The Government Publishing Office (GPO) is responsible for publishing and preserving official government information and has extensive experience hosting large volumes of congressional reports, legislative data, and other federal publications through GovInfo and related systems. GPO's core mission is permanent public access and digital preservation, and it has historically supported and hosted public-facing government information platforms.

In light of these roles, the Committee should consider whether GPO could play a supplementary or backstop role with respect to Inspector General reports—such as maintaining authoritative copies of reports currently available on Oversight.gov or providing hosting support—so as to strengthen long-term stability and ensure durable public access to this critical oversight material.

Report language:

IG Report Hosting and Preservation Study: The Committee directs the Government Publishing Office (GPO), in consultation with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE), to study the feasibility and cost of GPO serving as a supplementary or backstop platform for Inspector General activities. The study shall evaluate: (1) maintaining authoritative copies of reports currently made available through Oversight.gov and providing hosting or technical infrastructure support for that website; and (2) offering optional website and email hosting services for individual Offices of Inspector General. GPO shall assess technical requirements, cybersecurity implications, estimated costs, and any statutory changes required, and shall submit a report to the Committee not later than 180 days after the issuance of this report.

Government Publishing Office Gift Authority

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Government Publishing Office

Accounts: Public Information Programs of the Superintendent of Documents

Type of Request: Bill Text

Background:

The Government Publishing Office (GPO) plays a vital role in providing the American people with access to government information and records. However, the authority of government agencies to accept gifts, bequests, and devise of both monetary and nonmonetary property and distribute grants is generally restricted without specific statutory authorization. As the Government Accountability Office noted in a March 2, 2002 opinion (B-289903), an individual government agency may not accept gifts of goods or services for its own use without statutory authority.

This lack of explicit authority prevents GPO from accepting resources beyond its appropriated budget. This is in contrast to other legislative branch entities, such as the Library of Congress, and other federal entities with missions concerning access to information, including the Smithsonian Institution and the National Archives and Records Administration, all of which possess such gift authority.

Granting GPO the explicit authority to accept gifts would yield several significant benefits. It could provide GPO with resources beyond its appropriated budget, allowing it to undertake valuable projects, particularly in collaboration with Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) libraries and other organizations. Ultimately, extending gift authority to GPO could provide enormous benefits to the American people in terms of access to records, and potentially save taxpayer money. For more information, see the public witness testimony of James Jacobs before the House Legislative Branch Appropriations subcommittee on April 9, 2025.

This issue has been previously considered by Congress. Draft legislation to amend Title 44 of the US Code, released for public comment, contained a provision explicitly stating that "The Public Printer may accept and use gifts and bequests of property (both real and personal) and services in support of the Superintendent's responsibilities under this chapter". Section 109 of that draft bill provided for congressional oversight of accepted gifts and disclosure in semi-annual reports, which appears to be an appropriate framework. Providing GPO with the same gift authority available to other agencies that provide public access to government records is requested.

Bill Language:

Provided further, the Public Printer may accept and use gifts and bequests of property (both real and personal) and services in support of the Superintendent's responsibilities. Furthermore, in

accepting these gifts, not later than 45 days after the first 6 months of each fiscal year, and not later than 45 days after the next 6 months of each fiscal year, the Director of the Government Publishing Office shall submit to the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate, and post on the Government Publishing Office's public website for no-free public access, a report that includes gifts accepted by the Public printer under chapter 5 of this title, including the donor, the amount, and the disposition

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH - HOUSE ONLY

Technology and Modernization

Updating the Clerk’s List of Reports Due to Congress

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *House of Representatives*

Account: *Salaries, Officers, and Employees: Office of the Clerk*

Type of Request: Bill Text & Report Language

Background:

Congress routinely directs federal agencies to submit reports as part of its oversight function. Over time, thousands of such requirements have accumulated. These reports contain information essential to authorizing, appropriations, and oversight work across the House and Senate. Yet Congress does not currently have a complete, authoritative, and publicly accessible list of all congressionally mandated reports, nor a reliable mechanism to determine whether agencies are complying.

The House Report accompanying the FY 2026 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act recognized “the value of making statute-required reports more readily available and discoverable” and expressed interest in receiving from the Clerk the report described in H. Rept. 118-555 outlining the opportunities and challenges associated with doing so. (H. Rept. 119-178, p. 7).

A complete and authoritative list of reporting requirements would significantly improve congressional access to agency submissions. It would enable the Government Publishing Office to verify that it has received and published all reports required under the Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act (ACMRA) (P.L. 117-263) and would assist Congress in identifying duplicative or obsolete reporting requirements consistent with the Eliminate Useless Reports Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-172).

The Clerk has previously indicated a willingness to undertake this mission on a prospective basis but has identified resource constraints. One option would be to fund two additional Executive Communications Clerks, at an estimated annual cost of approximately \$350,000, to identify and track reporting mandates.

Alternatively, Congress could leverage or develop technology to automate identification of reporting requirements in statutory text. Legislative branch entities already employ advanced analytical tools to review legislative language, suggesting that automated extraction and tracking of reporting mandates is feasible. A technological solution could reduce reliance on manual compilation, address legacy requirements, streamline the tabulation already performed by the Clerk, and provide ongoing, scalable support to Members, committees, and legislative branch agencies.

Bill text:

Furthermore, the Clerk is appropriated an additional \$350,000 for the purpose of implementation of House Rule II clause 2(b).

Report language:

Congressionally Mandated Reports. Pursuant to House Rule II, clause 2(b), the Clerk of the House of Representatives prepares a list of reports required to be made to Congress. In furtherance of prior Committee direction to improve the availability of statute-required reports, the Clerk shall interpret this rule to include all reports due to Congress, including those directed to committees and subcommittees and those required by laws enacted in the 119th Congress and thereafter.

The Clerk may hire up to two Executive Communications Clerks and/or develop or procure technological tools to carry out this requirement and shall consult with other legislative branch entities to determine whether existing technological capabilities may be leveraged, including to identify reporting requirements from prior Congresses.

Public Availability of the Comparative Print Project

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *House of Representatives*

Account: *Salaries, Officers, and Employees: Office of the Clerk*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The Comparative Print Suite is a legislative analysis tool developed for Congressional staff that allows users to compare the text of two bills, view how an amendment would modify a bill, and see how a bill would amend the U.S. Code. It was made available to all House staff at compare.house.gov in October 2022 and is accessible to select staff across the Legislative Branch. While basic bill-to-bill comparisons do not require training, access to certain advanced functions currently requires training and authorization.

Understanding legislation in context—how one version differs from another and how proposed changes affect existing law—is essential for informed legislative decision-making. These capabilities would also be highly valuable to the public, civil society organizations, journalists, researchers, and others seeking to better understand congressional action. With core development of the Comparative Print Suite now complete, Congress should explore making appropriate aspects of its functionality—beginning with bill text comparison—available for public use.

Report Language:

Comparative Print Suite. Not later than 180 days after the issuance of this report, the Clerk of the House, in consultation with relevant legislative branch data partners, shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on House Administration, and make publicly available a report providing recommendations for making the Comparative Print Suite and/or its outputs available to the public. The report shall prioritize functionality showing how a bill would amend existing law.

Security Oversight

Allowing One TS/SCI Cleared Staffer Per Member

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: House of Representatives

Account: Salaries, Officers and Employees: Office of the Sergeant At Arms

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

Every Member of Congress has a constitutional responsibility to oversee classified activities. To fulfill that responsibility effectively, Members must have staff support from individuals with appropriate security clearances.

The Senate permits each Senator to designate one personal office staffer to obtain a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS/SCI) clearance. As a result, every Senator has access to a cleared staff member who may review classified materials and attend briefings, subject to need-to-know requirements.

The House of Representatives does not provide a comparable pathway for personal office staff to obtain TS/SCI access. While certain committee and leadership staff may hold such clearances, personal office staff may not—even if they already possess a TS/SCI clearance through prior service or military reserve duties. This creates disparities in access to information and constrains individual Members' ability to fully exercise their oversight responsibilities.

The House should update the House Security Manual to permit each Member to designate one personal office staffer as eligible to apply for a TS/SCI clearance. Because the investigative process for Top Secret and TS/SCI eligibility is the same, this change would not impose additional clearance-processing costs. It would provide parity with the Senate and strengthen Members' capacity to oversee classified matters.

Report Language:

Security Clearances: The Committee directs the House Security Division (HSD) of the Sergeant at Arms to amend the House of Representatives Security Policy Manual within 60 days of the issuance of this report to establish a procedure whereby one staff member per personal office shall be eligible to apply for access to Sensitive Compartmented Information. The HSD shall support them in their application for clearance as they do for all other congressional applications. In addition, staff who hold a TS/SCI clearance outside of their congressional employment shall be allowed to use their clearance in furtherance of their congressional duties. None of the foregoing shall alter the established precedence of a "need-to-know" determination made by the entity in possession of the classified information or material sought.

The Committee also directs the HSD to ensure any staffer who holds a TS/SCI clearance is provided adequate training as to the responsibilities of that clearance, including counterintelligence training. Furthermore, HSD shall regularly report on what additional programming and resources should be implemented and costs incurred to provide all congressional staff appropriate counterintelligence training.

Improved House of Representatives Security Clearance Tracking

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *House of Representatives*

Account: *Salaries, Offices and Employees: Office of the Sergeant at Arms*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

Members of Congress rely on cleared staff to review classified materials and conduct oversight of national security activities. Timely and equitable clearance processing is therefore essential to the House's constitutional responsibilities. Unlike the Executive branch—where personnel may receive interim access and often have clearances processed more quickly—congressional staff can wait a year or more for adjudication, limiting their ability to perform their duties. There are also concerns that Legislative Branch clearance requests are not treated uniformly, potentially creating disparities among committees and offices. Without transparent data, the House cannot assess timeliness, equity, or comparability to Executive branch standards.

The Intelligence Authorization Act of 2010 requires the President to submit an annual report on security clearance determinations, including processing timelines and related metrics. These reports have historically been publicly available, although it is unclear whether they continue to be produced. No comparable recurring public reporting exists for congressional staff.

In FY2020 (H. Rept. 116–64), the Legislative Branch Appropriations Committee directed the House Sergeant at Arms (SAA) to submit an unclassified report on congressional staff clearance processing times, including average and median adjudication periods, with an optional classified annex by clearance level. This represented a compromise; more granular data—such as clearance rates by level and by recipient office—would provide greater oversight value.

Although the SAA produced a report, it was designated as Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI), limiting public release and reducing its usefulness for oversight and comparison. The House therefore lacks a transparent, recurring mechanism to monitor clearance performance and identify disparities or delays.

Because these concerns persist, the SAA should again be directed to provide an annual, publicly available report on congressional staff clearance processing times, without omission or redaction. The report should model the publicly released data tables from the 2015 Annual Report on Security Clearance Determinations. Regular reporting would allow the House to assess timeliness and equity across offices and determine whether corrective action is necessary.

Report language:

House Security Clearances Report. The Committee is concerned that delays and disparities may exist in the processing of congressional staff security clearances, thereby impeding Members' ability to conduct timely and effective oversight of classified activities. The Committee directs the Sergeant at Arms to submit to the Committee, and make publicly available without redaction or omission, an unclassified report on congressional staff security clearance processing times not later than March 1, and annually thereafter.

Using the 2015 Annual Report on Security Clearance Determinations as a model, the report shall include: (1) average and median processing times by clearance level (Confidential, Secret, Top Secret, and TS/SCI); (2) such data cross-tabulated by staff category (committee, personal office, leadership, and support offices); and (3) average and median processing times by committee. The data shall be presented in a structured format to facilitate comparison over time and, where practicable, align with Executive branch reporting.

Information Management

Evaluate Mechanisms for the Generation of Unofficial Transcripts of Committee Proceedings Within 24-Hours of the Proceeding

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *House of Representatives*

Account: *Clerk of the House of Representatives*

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

Since 1873, the House of Representatives has published next-day transcripts of floor proceedings in the Congressional Record, along with a permanent edition at the end of each session. Reporting on congressional debates dates back even further: Congress hired its first official reporter in 1795. The House ultimately brought transcription in-house to ensure timeliness, reduce excessive private-sector costs, and improve accuracy.

Committee operations historically differed from floor proceedings, and today committees hire stenographers to produce transcripts that are later published as part of official committee reports. These reports can take months or years to appear due to review and editing. While private companies often provide next-day transcripts, access can be expensive.

More timely access to committee transcripts would significantly enhance their usefulness. Rapid availability could enable alerts when specific issues are raised, support AI-driven summaries, and strengthen journalistic and data-driven analysis of congressional deliberations. For more than a decade, House rules have required committees to livestream their proceedings, typically on YouTube. At the same time, parliaments worldwide have adopted AI-driven automated transcription systems that produce high-quality, inexpensive, near-instantaneous transcripts that are subsequently reviewed and corrected by expert staff.

The House should consider producing “daily” unofficial committee transcripts within 24 hours of a hearing—similar to the daily Congressional Record—to be followed later by a reviewed and official “permanent” edition. Providing daily transcripts would improve accessibility, including for individuals with disabilities, and facilitate integration into modern, data-driven workflows.

The Clerk of the House, in consultation with committees, the Government Publishing Office, the Library of Congress, and other stakeholders, should evaluate options for generating such transcripts. In doing so, the Clerk should assess utility, timeliness, cost, intelligibility, and accuracy, as well as recommend how to ensure public discoverability, technological accessibility, proper archiving, and opportunities for public input.

Report Language:

Committee Proceeding Transcripts: Not later than 180 days after issuance of this report, the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on House Administration, and make publicly available, a report evaluating the utility, feasibility, and mechanisms for automatically generating unofficial transcripts of open committee proceedings, including potential release within 24 hours, similar to the House’s daily publication

of the Congressional Record. The Clerk shall consider feasibility, expense, timeliness, economy, intelligibility, accuracy, and avoidance of additional burdens on committee staff; recommend measures to ensure public discoverability, accessibility to technology developers, and proper archiving; consult with House committees, the Government Publishing Office, the Congressional Data Task Force, the Library of Congress, and the public; and examine practices of other national parliaments employing automated or AI-assisted transcription with expert review to assess applicability to the House.

Report on Legislative Service Organizations

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: House of Representatives

Account: *Salaries and Expenses: Inspector General*

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

Legislative Service Organizations (LSOs) were Member-led groups that enabled collaboration, policy development, and expertise-building among Members with shared interests. Dating to the early 1800s and expanding significantly in the late twentieth century, LSOs played a major institutional role from the 1960s through the early 1990s, supported in part by outside funding.

The House first regulated LSOs in 1979. In 1995, they were disbanded because they were disfavored by incoming leadership, and replaced with Congressional Member Organizations (CMOs), barred from accepting outside support and limited in their use of official resources (though some maintain parallel external entities). In 2015, the Committee on House Administration created the Eligible Congressional Member Organization (eCMO) designation, allowing certain CMOs to use allocated Member staff time; 14 CMOs hold eCMO status in the 119th Congress.

Despite growth in CMOs, Members may not use the Members' Representational Allowance (MRA), provide office space, use the frank, or accept outside funding to support them. The 116th Congress Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress recognized their value and recommended expanded support (Recommendations 71 and 72).

Because LSOs once enabled Members to develop expertise and durable working relationships—and CMOs lack comparable capacity—we propose creation of a report into whether a funding model can be found that allows eCMOs to capture the benefits of LSOs without the risks of outside funding.

Report Language:

Report on Legislative Service Organization Resources. Within 180 days of the issuance of this report, the Committee directs the House Inspector General to submit to the Committee on House Administration, the Committee on Rules, the Committee on Appropriations, and make publicly available, a report evaluating the cost, benefits, and feasibility of alternative funding models for Eligible Congressional Member Organizations (eCMOs). In conducting this evaluation, the Inspector General shall consult with the public and existing eCMOs and consider, among other options, the creation of a dedicated fund of \$4,310,000, separate from the Members' Representational Allowance, under which each Member and Delegate may designate up to \$10,000 annually to the eCMO or eCMOs of their choice.

Empowering Oversight of the Institution

Enhancing Data Quality in the Statement of Disbursements

Appropriations Committee: *Legislative Branch*

Agency: *House of Representatives*

Account: *Salaries, Officers and Employees: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The House of Representatives has published the Statement of Disbursements of the House quarterly since 1964, detailing receipts and expenditures for Members, committees, leadership, officers, and offices. Since July 1, 2009, the reports have been available online in PDF format, and since January 1, 2016, in spreadsheet (CSV) format. The shift to digital publication has significantly enhanced public transparency and data reuse.

In recent years, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) has improved the spreadsheet version by adding structured metadata, including a unique identifier for each spending office, unique identifiers for many recipients of funds, and budget codes. These additions reduce ambiguity and enable more reliable analysis. For example, because multiple Members share common surnames, the inclusion of each Member's bioguide ID ensures accurate attribution of expenditures.

Although the Statement includes unique identifiers for businesses, it does not currently include a unique identifier for each staffer receiving funds. This omission can create confusion when tracking staff compensation across reports or over time, particularly where multiple individuals share the same name.

Accordingly, the CAO should be directed to publish a non-sensitive unique identifier for each staffer in the Statement of Disbursements. The House's existing "ID Hub" service can generate such identifiers without disclosing confidential employee numbers. The CAO has indicated the technical capability to do so but requires formal direction from the House.

Report language:

Individual Unique Identifiers: To the extent feasible, the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer shall publish non-sensitive, persistent unique identifiers for each individual to whom a disbursement of funds is recorded in the Statement of Disbursements of the House, beginning with the first reporting period following issuance of this report.

Study On Improving Tracking of Congressional Fellows

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: House of Representatives

Account: Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The committee report accompanying the FY2025 House Legislative Branch Appropriations Act (H. Rept. 118-555, p. 8) reiterated direction to the House Sergeant at Arms to develop a “comprehensive set of best practices governing the onboarding, training, and oversight of fellows serving in congressional offices.” It is unclear whether such a report has been completed. This reflects sustained congressional concern regarding the oversight and integrity of fellowship programs.

Members and committees in the House have used congressional fellows since the 1950s. Fellows temporarily serve in House offices as part of mid-career educational programs while remaining compensated by their sponsoring organizations, and they do not count against a Member’s employee ceiling. They are subject to House Ethics Committee guidance, which prohibits assignments that directly or indirectly benefit a sponsoring entity and bars fellows from improperly supplanting official staff. Fellows may be sponsored by educational institutions or public or private organizations, may in some cases pay for participation, and are not limited to U.S. nationals.

Despite these guardrails, risks remain. A 2018 report by the Project On Government Oversight found that Congress has not consistently enforced ethics rules governing fellows and warned that certain sponsorship arrangements could pose conflicts of interest or risks to the integrity of the Legislative Branch.

There is no comprehensive public accounting of fellows serving in the House. While the Congressional Research Service has compiled a non-public partial list, the House does not publish a centralized record of fellows or their sponsors. By contrast, the Senate maintains a public list of outside fellowship sponsors and, under Senate Rule 41, requires fellows and supervisors to file disclosures regarding outside compensation; those filings are publicly available.

Although fellows often perform staff-like duties and receive access to official resources, they do not appear in the publicly available Statement of Disbursements, and there is no public database identifying who is serving in House offices under fellowship arrangements.

Accordingly, the House should comprehensively track fellows, identify circumstances in which conflicts of interest or national security concerns may arise, and require fellows and supervisors to file disclosures comparable to those required by the Senate. That information should be published in an online, searchable database.

Report Language:

Congressional Fellowship Task Force. The Committee recognizes the value fellows provide to congressional offices, but also the potential risks to the integrity of the Legislative process. The Committee therefore directs the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to establish a standardized disclosure form, to be completed by all fellows and host offices, collecting the fellow's name; start and end dates; level of financial support; assigned office and its unique identifier; sponsoring organization and its EIN; characteristics of the sponsoring entity; source of fellowship funds; and whether the funder engages in federal advocacy. The CAO shall implement a system to identify noncompliance and, not later than 360 days after issuance of this report, implement the system, train offices, and make publicly available an online, searchable database of all fellows serving in the House.

Funding And Transparency Relating To The House Office Of General Counsel

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: House of Representatives

Account: Salaries, Officers and Employees: Office of the General Counsel

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides nonpartisan legal advice and assistance to Members, committees, officers, and employees of the House on matters relating to their official duties, and represents the House in litigation, both as a party and as amicus curiae, in cases implicating institutional interests. OGC operates pursuant to the direction of the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG), which determines the institutional legal position of the House in litigation matters.

Although OGC maintains a website, it contains limited, largely general information and does not appear to be regularly updated. By contrast, the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel maintains a robust public website with accessible legal opinions supporting executive branch positions. This disparity risks weakening the House's institutional voice in separation-of-powers disputes, particularly in oversight litigation involving the executive branch.

Additional funding should be provided to enhance OGC's capacity to expand and maintain its public-facing legal resources. The Senate Legal Counsel is subject to a statutory mandate (2 U.S.C. § 288g(b)) to make publicly available court papers and research memoranda relating to significant congressional legal issues; no comparable expectation exists for OGC. OGC should be directed to expand its website to provide non-privileged information regarding its legal advice and representation, including court filings, legal opinions, and selected explanatory or historical materials illuminating the House's institutional positions. The website should also provide basic information regarding BLAG, including its composition, function, and instances in which it authorizes or directs OGC to take litigation positions.

For additional discussion, see the testimony of former House Senior Counsel Michael Stern submitted to the Committee for FY2025.

Report Language:

Office of General Counsel Transparency. Within 90 days of issuance of this report and on an ongoing basis thereafter, the Office of General Counsel (OGC) shall expand and maintain its public website to provide non-privileged information regarding its legal advice and representation of the House. Such information shall include court filings, legal opinions, and selected explanatory or historical materials that illuminate the institutional legal positions of the House. The website shall also include basic information regarding the Bipartisan Legal Advisory

Group (BLAG), including its composition, function, and instances in which it authorizes or directs OGC to take litigation positions on behalf of the House.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH - SENATE ONLY

Study on Senate Pay, Benefits, and Professional Development

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: United States Senate

Account: Secretary of the Senate

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

Ensuring that Senate staff compensation is competitive and fair is critical to attracting and retaining highly qualified staff. In FY 2019, the Senate directed the Secretary of the Senate to conduct, or contract with an independent external entity to conduct, a comprehensive review of salaries and benefits for staff employed in Senators' offices and Senate committees. (S Rept. 115-274, p. 22). That review was to evaluate the extent to which Senate staff receive similar pay for similar work, both internally and in comparison to the Executive Branch and the private sector, and to assess disparities within the Senate by gender, race, and ethnicity, taking into account job responsibilities, experience, and qualifications. Similar studies have been conducted by the Senate in the past, previously in 2006 and 2001.

It has now been several years since that review was ordered. Given changes in labor markets, cost of living, and workforce expectations, the Senate should again undertake a comprehensive compensation and human capital review using the same core framework. A renewed study would provide updated, comparable data on pay equity, competitiveness, and retention, and help ensure that Senate compensation practices support a modern, professional legislative workforce while maintaining appropriate confidentiality protections and voluntary participation.

Report Language:

Senate Staff Compensation Review.— Ensuring that Senate staff compensation is competitive and fair is critical to attracting and retaining highly-qualified staff. The Secretary of the Senate is directed to conduct a review, or contract with an independent external entity to conduct a review, of the salaries and benefits of staff employed by Senators' offices and Senate Committees to evaluate the extent to which Senate staff receive similar pay for similar work, both internally and externally to the Senate.

The review must, to the extent possible, compare staff compensation to the Executive Branch and the private sector. The review must also compare staff compensation within the Senate with respect to gender, race, and ethnicity, and must consider job responsibilities, experience, and outside qualifications, including education, in making such comparisons. Providing such compensation data is strictly voluntary for any Senator's office or Senate Committee, and any such office may direct that its data be excluded from the review. The review should note, in the aggregate, how many offices chose not to participate. The Secretary, or contracting entity, must take all reasonable and necessary steps to ensure that the data gathered is securely protected and kept confidential.

The Committee directs that such review be initiated, or contracted for, within 12 months of enactment and that a report summarizing the review be submitted, within 18 months of enactment, to the Committee on Appropriations and upon request to any Senator. The report must provide summaries of such comparisons and exclude any information that could be used to identify any individual, any Senator's office, any Committee, or any other entity of the Senate, similar to reports published in 2019, 2006, and 2001. This report, and the reports published in 2019, 2006, 2001, 1999, 1997, 1995, 1993, 1991, and 1988, shall be published in a central location on the Secretary of the Senate's website. In addition to publishing the report in PDF format, the information shall also be published in spreadsheet format.

Timely Publication of Senate Bills and Reports

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Senate

Account: Contingent Expenses of the Senate: Office of the Secretary / Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

Senators and the public require timely and complete access to bills, amendments, and committee reports prior to floor consideration. Senators must be able to review legislative text to make informed decisions, and the public must have access to pending legislation to engage meaningfully in the democratic process.

Historically, access has been uneven. The Senate's Amendment Tracking System provided Senators-only access to legislation and amendments, but typically limited to approximately the first 150 pages and often posted as image files rather than structured legislative data, constraining analytical tools and comparison capabilities. Public access through Congress.gov has at times lagged floor action, with full text appearing days or weeks after consideration.

In the explanatory statement accompanying the FY2023 Senate Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, appropriators directed the Secretary of the Senate and the Sergeant at Arms to report on the feasibility of developing a central, publicly available repository for official Senate bills, amendments, resolutions, and committee documents. Since that time, the Senate has deployed a more modern internal-facing system to manage legislative documents, although the full scope and capabilities of that system are not publicly described.

While improved internal access is a positive development, it does not fully address the need for timely public availability. To ensure transparency and support informed legislative deliberation, the Secretary of the Senate should direct that legislative text maintained within the internal system—when relevant to floor proceedings—be made publicly available in a timely and structured format to allow the public access to bills, amendments, and committee reports contemporaneously with floor consideration.

Report language:

Legislative Document Public Access.— The Committee directs the Secretary of the Senate, with the support of the Sergeant at Arms, to provide timely public access to legislative text maintained within the Senate's legislative document management system when such text is relevant to floor proceedings. Such materials shall be made publicly available as soon as appropriate, no later than upon floor consideration and, to the extent practicable, published in a structured data format. Implementation shall be completed not later than 360 days after issuance of this report.

Caption and Transcription Services For Senate Proceedings

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: Senate

Account: Contingent Expenses of the Senate: Secretary of the Senate

Type of request: Report Language

Background:

The Committee has expressed sustained interest in strengthening captioning and transcription services. The FY2026 Legislative Branch Appropriations report (S. Rept. 119-38, p. 20) directed the Secretary of the Senate, in coordination with the Sergeant-at-Arms, to provide an update within 60 days of enactment on efforts to expand captioning and translation services, including the use of emerging technologies, and to outline options for increasing classified transcription capacity. This followed similar FY2025 direction regarding expansion of captioning services.

The Senate provides closed captioning for many live floor sessions and committee proceedings, particularly those that are televised or streamed online. However, caption text is not consistently preserved and made publicly available in a structured, reusable format, and official transcripts may be released only after significant delay.

Systematic release of caption text as an “unofficial” daily transcript, clearly labeled as unedited and subject to revision, would support internal Senate needs, including improved searchability, data integration, and institutional recordkeeping, while also benefiting researchers, journalists, and the public. These unofficial transcripts would not replace the official, final transcript, which would remain the authoritative record.

Building on prior directives, the Senate should ensure that caption text for all open committee proceedings is captured, preserved, and released in machine-readable format, on a near real-time basis.

Report Language:

Captioning Services. The Committee directs the Sergeant at Arms to ensure that caption text for all open Senate committee proceedings is captured, preserved, and made publicly available in a structured and machine-readable format, starting no later than 360 days after issuance of this report. Such caption text shall be published online on a near real-time basis as an “unofficial” transcript, clearly labeled as unedited and subject to revision, and shall not replace the official, final transcript. The Committee further directs the Sergeant at Arms to examine best practices employed by other national parliaments that utilize high-quality automated transcription systems with staff review for both in-chamber and committee use, and to incorporate appropriate models that combine automated tools with human oversight.

Publish the Semiannual Report of the Secretary of the Senate Concerning Senate Expenditures As Data

Appropriations Committee: Legislative Branch

Agency: United States Senate

Account: Office of the Secretary

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-68) directed the Secretary of the Senate to publish the semiannual Report of the Secretary of the Senate concerning Senate expenditures online, beginning with the first full semiannual period of the 112th Congress. This report, published in some form since 1964, records all Senate expenditures and is intended to provide for public review of Senate spending.

Although the report is now available online, it is published in PDF format, which significantly limits accessibility and analysis. For example, reports covering specific periods are often released as scanned documents rather than structured data, making it difficult to sort, search, or analyze expenditures. By contrast, the House of Representatives began publishing its Statement of Disbursements in spreadsheet (CSV) format in 2016, enabling easier reuse and analysis, and has since enhanced the dataset with additional metadata.

The 2010 law expressly permits publication of the Senate report “in other forms at the discretion of the Secretary of the Senate.” Publishing the semiannual report as structured data would better serve its transparency purpose while also supporting internal Senate needs, including tools such as LegiDex, workforce and compensation studies, and other institutional analyses. Accordingly, the Senate should direct that the semiannual Report of the Secretary of the Senate be published in a structured, machine-readable format in addition to PDF.

Report Language:

Report of the Secretary of the Senate. Not later than 360 days after issuance of this report, the Secretary of the Senate shall publish the forthcoming semiannual Report of the Secretary of the Senate concerning Senate expenditures, and all such reports thereafter, in a structured, machine-readable format, such as CSV, in addition to any other formats. The published data shall include appropriate metadata to facilitate analysis and reuse.

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Strengthening the FOIA Advisory Committee

Appropriations Committee: Financial Services and General Government

Agency: National Archives and Records Administration

Account: Operating Expenses

Type of request: Bill Text and Report Language

Background:

The FOIA Advisory Committee was established as a discretionary federal advisory committee by the National Archives on May 5, 2014, and has continued to provide useful recommendations to the National Archives and Congress on reforms to the Freedom of Information Act and improvements in how agencies administer that keystone transparency law. However, as many non-statutory advisory committees are sunseting, it is advisable to re-establish the FOIA Advisory Committee as a statutory advisory committee under the same charter, membership, and terms of reference, so that it can continue its work. In addition, because the work of the FOIA Advisory Committee is so useful to Congress, it should be able to communicate to relevant committees of jurisdiction and to the public directly and not only through the Archivist of the United States.

Report Language:

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Advisory Committee.— The Committee acknowledges and appreciates the work of the FOIA Advisory Committee, initially established as a discretionary federal advisory committee by the National Archives on May 5, 2014. In addition to its existing authorities and responsibilities, the Committee directs the Chair of the FOIA Advisory Committee to provide reports, recommendations, and other communications directly to the Senate Judiciary Committee, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and to House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees with jurisdiction over FOIA and government operations, and be responsive to communications from members of those Committees. In addition, when the FOIA Advisory Committee determines it appropriate, it shall publish reports, recommendations, and other communications online for public access.

Bill Text:

Add the phrase "the activities of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Advisory Committee not to exceed \$500,000" within the operating expenses paragraph as follows:

For necessary expenses in connection with the administration of the National Archives and Records Administration and archived Federal records and related activities, as provided by law, and for expenses necessary for the review and declassification of documents, the activities of the Public Interest Declassification Board, the activities of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Advisory Committee not to exceed \$500,000, the operations and maintenance of the electronic records archives, the hire of passenger motor vehicles, not to exceed \$10,000 for official reception and representation expenses, and for uniforms or allowances therefor, as authorized by law ([5 U.S.C. 5901](#)), including maintenance, repairs, and cleaning, \$434,650,000, of which

\$30,000,000 shall remain available until expended for expenses necessary to enhance the Federal Government's ability to electronically preserve, manage, and store Government records.

Re-establishing the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee

Appropriations Committee: Financial Services and General Government

Agency: General Services Administration

Account: General Activities: Government-Wide Policy

Type of request: Bill Text and Report Language

Background:

The Open Government Advisory Committee (OG FAC) was established as a discretionary federal advisory committee by the General Services Administration (GSA) Administrator in June 2024. Its purpose was to advise GSA on its open government initiatives, including the development, implementation, and monitoring of U.S. Open Government National Action Plans (NAPs) and related commitment themes. The OG FAC's initial focus was to provide advice on the development of NAP 6, open government policy, and public engagement strategies, and to support the GSA's Open Government Secretariat by identifying emerging issues, challenges, and opportunities.

The OG FAC began meeting monthly in September 2024 and made steady progress in providing recommendations to strengthen openness and transparency across the federal government. Its creation marked the culmination of more than 15 years of public advocacy for a formal advisory body to guide U.S. open government efforts. However, the OG FAC was dissolved in February 2025 as part of a government-wide effort to eliminate many non-statutory advisory committees.

To continue this vital work, the OG FAC should be re-established as a statutory advisory committee, maintaining the same charter, membership structure, and terms of reference. Given the importance of its work not only to the Executive Branch but also to Congress, the reauthorized OG FAC should have the authority to communicate directly with relevant congressional committees and the public.

Report language:

The Open Government (OG) Advisory Committee.— The Committee acknowledges and appreciates the work of the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee, initially established as a discretionary federal advisory committee by the General Services Administration on July 28, 2024. In addition to its existing authorities and responsibilities, the Committee directs the Chair of the OG Federal Advisory Committee to provide reports, recommendations, and other communications directly to the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and relevant House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees, and to respond to communications from members of those Committees. The Committee further directs that, as the OG Federal Advisory Committee deems appropriate, it shall publish reports, recommendations, and other communications online for public access.

Bill Text:

In the section "Government-wide policy," add the phrase "for the activities of the Open Government (OG) Federal Advisory Committee not to exceed \$500,000;" as follows:

For expenses authorized by law, not otherwise provided for, for Government-wide policy associated with the management of real and personal property assets and certain administrative services; for the activities of the Open Government (OG) Federal Advisory Committee not to exceed \$500,000; Government-wide policy support responsibilities relating to acquisition, travel, motor vehicles, information technology management, and related technology activities; and services as authorized by [5 U.S.C. 3109](#); and evaluation activities as authorized by statute; \$69,000,000.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND SCIENCE

Improve Executive Branch Accountability by Providing an Index of Justice Department Office of Legal Counsel Opinions Currently in Effect

Appropriations Committee: Commerce, Justice, Science

Agency: Department of Justice

Account: General Provisions

Type of Request: Report language

Background:

Final legal opinions by the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel are considered by the Executive branch to be binding, authoritative interpretations of law. Not all opinions are published to the public or to Congress, creating blind spots for lawmaking and public accountability. Secret law undermines the mechanisms by which democracy works because it undercuts our system of checks and balances. Congress and the public must be made aware of the existence of every OLC opinion and their contents should be disclosed to Congress and, to the fullest extent possible, to the public as well.

Both House Republicans and House Democrats have originated strong report language concerning OLC opinions. The report language accompanying the FY 2025 House CJS Appropriations Bill states "Office of Legal Counsel Opinions.—The Committee encourages the Attorney General to publish all legal opinions and other materials of the Office of Legal Counsel that are appropriate for publication, in particular those materials which are the subject of repeated requests or which may be of public or historical interest." (H. Rept. 118-582, p. 46). The Explanatory Materials accompanying the FY 2024 House CJS Appropriations Bill, H.R. 5893, contains the same text. Appropriators have jointly spoken on this matter every year since at least 2020 — and the Department of Justice has failed to comply with Congress's direction.

The 2021 settlement of a lawsuit brought by the Knight First Amendment Center, *Francis v. DOJ*, resulted in an agreement whereby the DOJ published an index of unclassified OLC opinions written between 1945 and February 15, 1994, an index of all classified OLC opinions issued between 1974 and 2021 except those classified above Top Secret, as well as 230 opinions listed on the indices. Parallel litigation, *Campaign for Accountability v. DOJ*, resulted in a District Court opinion in April 2024 that the Justice Department must "disclose all formal legal opinions that resolve disputes between executive agencies." That opinion held OLC opinions resolving interagency disputes are final opinions that fall within FOIA's proactive disclosure provision.

We respectfully request that you direct the Office of Legal Counsel to make its opinions publicly available upon issuance, except in narrow circumstances, and to fill in the gaps in availability. In addition, we request direct the Office of Legal Counsel to release an index of all current OLC opinions and to update that index on a regular basis. We encourage the committee to include bill text or strongly directive report language.

Report Language:

Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) opinions.—To serve the public interest, and in keeping with transparency and the precedent of public reporting of judicial decisions, the Committee directs the Attorney General to direct OLC to publish on a publicly accessible website all legal opinions and related materials, except in those instances where the Attorney General determines that release would cause a specific identifiable harm to the national defense or foreign policy interests; information contained in the opinion relates to the appointment of a specific individual not confirmed to Federal office; or information contained in the opinion is specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than sections 552 and 552b of title 5, United States Code). For final OLC opinions for which the text is withheld in full or in substantial part, the Attorney General should provide Congress a written explanation detailing why the text was withheld.

In addition, the Attorney General is directed to instruct the OLC to publish on a publicly accessible website a complete index of all final OLC opinions in both human-readable and machine-readable formats, arranged chronologically, within 90 days of the issuance of this report, which shall be updated immediately every time an OLC opinion or a revision to an opinion becomes final. The index shall include, for each opinion: the full name of the opinion; the date it was finalized or revised; each author's name; each recipient's name; a unique identifier assigned to each final or revised opinion; and whether an opinion has been withdrawn.

DEFENSE

Improved Tracking of Security Clearances

Subcommittee: *Defense*

Agency: *Intelligence Community Management Account*

Account: *N/A*

Type of Request: Report Language

Background:

The Director of National Intelligence conducts an annual report on security clearance determinations, required by the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. While the Obama Administration required the Director of National Intelligence to provide more comprehensive public data in 2015, the DNI has released less detail about clearances since 2016. The Intelligence Authorization Act for FY 2010 also required an annual report to Congress on the number of employees and contractors who hold security clearances, the levels at which they hold them, the breakdown by Executive branch agency, and an accounting for how long it took to obtain determinations on whether the clearances were granted or denied.

The Intelligence Authorization Act for FY 2020, enacted as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2020, undermined some public reporting under the FY 2010 law. While it did not strike language concerning government-wide reporting on the number of employees and contractors who hold security clearances and the levels at which they are held, it ended public reporting of the agency-by-agency breakdown of this information as well as information concerning processing times and the results of adjudications. The reports are now only available to select congressional committees in an unclassified form. We encourage the committee to return the Director of National Intelligence to Obama-era levels of transparency with regards to security clearances.

Report Language:

Security Clearance Reports: Within 120 days of issuance of this report, the Director of National Intelligence shall report to Congress and make publicly available all previous reports regarding the security clearances processed by each element of the intelligence community. The Committee also directs the Director of National Intelligence to publish all future reports online on an ongoing basis. Each report submitted shall separately identify security clearances processed for Federal employees and contractor employees sponsored by each such element as described in 50 U.S.C. § 3104.