September 19, 2014

Dear Chairman Thune and Vice Chair Blunt:

We request you publish online the rules for the United States Senate Republican Conference. Just as publication of the rules for the United States Senate is necessary for government accountability, so too is publication of conference rules. Public access empowers understanding of legislative branch activities, provides essential detail on how you govern, and exemplifies your commitment to open government.

The rules adopted by your conference at the beginning of each Congress significantly affect the legislative process. They determine consequential matters such as how legislation emerges from the chamber and who is eligible to lead each committee. For example, the House's policies regarding public access to legislation three days prior to a vote and restrictions on earmarks were set by that conference's rules. In addition, the rules set the default regarding the conference's commitment to be transparent, and highlight how the different parties would lead the chamber.

The House Republican Conference already published its rules online for the 113th Congress. We hope this policy will be adopted by both parties and in both chambers for the 114th Congress. With trust in Congress at historic lows, proactively enabling the public to understand the rules you have set for yourself is an indisputable necessity. We ask that you make the rules accessible on the Internet as soon as possible, preferably in the same format in which the House of Representatives, the Library of Congress and the Government Printing Office already publish House bill information on [Beta.Congress.Gov](): in a modern, open, restriction-free format that a user can download in bulk.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further. Please contact Matt Rumsey, Policy Associate at the Sunlight Foundation ([mrumsey@sunlightfoundation.com]() or 202-742-1520).

Sincerely,

American Association of Law Libraries

American Civil Liberties Union – ACLU

American Library Association

Center for Effective Government

Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington – CREW

Common Cause

The Constitution Project

Data Transparency Coalition

Free Government Information

Government Accountability Project – GAP

iSolon.org

National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Northern California Association of Law Libraries

OpenGov Foundation

OpenTheGovernment.org

People For the American Way Foundation

Project On Government Oversight – POGO

Public Citizen

Rural Coalition Washington

Society of American Archivists

Society of Professional Journalists

The Sunlight Foundation

Tully Center for Free Speech at Syracuse University

Individual signatories (additional information for identification purposes only):

Norman Ornstein, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute

cc: Minority Leader McConnell
     Minority Whip Cornyn