

April 5, 2018

Dear Chairman Harper and Ranking Member Brady:

We, the 45 undersigned organizations, write to express our strong support for the bipartisan Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act (“ACMRA”) and to respectfully urge the Committee to consider the legislation at its next markup, scheduled for April 12.

If enacted, ACMRA will strengthen Congressional oversight and improve government transparency. ACMRA establishes a central repository for agency reports submitted to Congress and tracks whether agencies have submitted the reports. This will improve all Members of Congress’s access to the reports and ensure Congress knows when they become available.

ACMRA directs agencies to provide the Government Publishing Office any report that is both required by law to be submitted to Congress and is releasable under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”). It does not change what information is in the public sphere, but will improve its accessibility. Nor does it affect in any way what information is provided to Congressional committees or place any burden upon them.

Under ACMRA, agency reports will become publicly available on GPO’s website within 30 days of submission to Congress, and will be redacted in accordance with FOIA’s provisions, which include the removal of classified or otherwise confidential material. Additionally, the Congressional Research Service will identify all agency reports the law requires be submitted to Congress, supplementing the work already performed by the Clerk of the House. This will tell us whether an agency has complied with its obligation to submit reports in a timely fashion.

The Committee on House Administration has favorably reported ACMRA in prior Congresses, and the measure was favorably reported this Congress by the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on February 6th, 2018. Virtually identical legislation is sponsored in the Senate by Sens. Portman and Klobuchar. ACMRA was first introduced in 2010 and we are hopeful it will become part of this Congress’s transparency legacy.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of the measure and are hopeful ACMRA will be favorably reported at the April 12th meeting.

Sincerely yours,

American Association of Law Libraries
American Library Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Association of Research Libraries
Campaign for Accountability
Center for Data Innovation
Center for Media and Democracy
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Coalition for Peace Action and the Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare
Community Research
Data Coalition
Defending Rights & Dissent
Defense Priorities Initiative
Demand Progress Action
Detention Watch Network
Essential Information
Free Government Information
FreedomWorks
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
GovTrack.us
Human Rights First
Issue One
LegiStorm LLC
National Coalition for History
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
National Security Archive
National Taxpayers Union
New America's Open Technology Institute
New America's Public Interest Technology Program
Niskanen Center
Northern California Association of Law Libraries
Open the Government
Project On Government Oversight
Quorum
R Street Institute

Reclaim The Records
Senior Executives Association (SEA)
Society of Professional Journalists
Sunlight Foundation
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance
Union of Concerned Scientists
Win Without War

cc: Committee on House Administration