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June 28, 2018

The Honorable Steve Daines
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Chris Murphy
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Tim Ryan
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations

Re: Clarifying Differences in Report Language in Conducting a Technology Assessment Study

Dear Chairman Daines, Chairman Fortenberry, Ranking Member Murphy, and Ranking Member Ryan:

Thank you for the valuable work you and your committees have undertaken to address the need for expanding congressional capacity. The House and Senate have produced appropriations report language calling for an evaluation of the legislature's internal science and technology expertise, for which we are most appreciative and supportive.

There are some differences in the language between the two chambers. Specifically, the entity responsible for overseeing the work is at variance: the Congressional Research Service in one chamber and the Government Accountability Office in the other. The reports also scope the study differently.

We are predominantly concerned that the capacity assessment take place in a fair, even-handed, and timely fashion, and result in concrete recommendations for action. Hence, we hope you will confer jointly to decide responsibility and issue guidance so that the relevant agency or agencies may proceed.

As we face advanced cybersecurity threats, daily technological dependence, and the policy intersection of information accessibility and privacy, it is vital that Congress is able to understand emerging technological issues and respond proportionally to their risks. We appreciate your ongoing attention to this issue.

Free markets. Real solutions.

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If we may be of any service in your efforts, please contact us via Sasha Moss (smoss@rstreet.org; 202-900-8285).

Sincerely,

Zach Graves, Lincoln Network
Kevin R. Kosar, R Street Institute
Daniel Schuman, Demand Progress