

July 17, 2019

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Democratic Leader Schumer, and Members of the Senate:

We, the 29 undersigned organizations, write to express our strong support for the bipartisan Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act (“ACMRA”) and to respectfully urge you to support H.R. 736. If enacted, the ACMRA will strengthen Congressional oversight and improve government transparency.

The ACMRA will establish a central repository of agency reports submitted to Congress and will track whether agencies have submitted required reports. This will improve Members of Congress’s access to the reports and ensure Congress knows when they become available.

The ACMRA also 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, subject to certain limitations. The legislation will not change what information is in the public sphere, but it will improve accessibility. Nor does the legislation affect in any way what information is provided to Congressional committees.

Under the 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. Reports will be assigned a unique identifier that will make it easy to track reports as new editions are released.

Additionally, the Congressional Research Service will supplement work already performed by the Clerk to identify all agency reports the law requires be submitted to Congress. This will tell us whether an agency has complied with its obligation to submit reports in a timely fashion.

In April, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee favorably reported companion legislation, S. 195, which is co-sponsored by Sens. Portman, Klobuchar, and Hassan. The House of Representatives passed ACMRA on July 17.

The 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 the ACMRA will be enacted shortly.

Sincerely yours,

American Association of Law Libraries
American Library Association
Americans for Prosperity
Campaign for Accountability
Center for Data Innovation
Center for Responsive Politics
Demand Progress
Data Coalition
Essential Information
Free Government Information
FreedomWorks
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
GovTrack.us
Judicial Watch
Liberty Coalition
Lincoln Network
National Coalition for History
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Security Archive
PEGI Project
Project On Government Oversight
R Street Institute
Senior Executives Association
Society of Professional Journalists
Sunlight Foundation
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Union of Concerned Scientists
Win Without War

Cc: The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable Maggie Hassan