

The Honorable Kevin Yoder
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC

April 2, 2018

Dear Representative Yoder,

Thank you for your leadership and indefatigable efforts to provide public access to Congressional Research Service reports. Public access is now the law of the land—and it happened because of you.

You opened up the House Legislative Branch Appropriations subcommittee to hear from public witnesses, a practice that had been discontinued for several years. You met with representatives from civil society who advocated for public access to CRS reports, and once you gathered the facts, you took action, and did so on a bipartisan basis.

You included language to make CRS reports publicly available in your chairman's mark, which was favorably adopted by the subcommittee. And when that provision was challenged in the full committee, you successfully fought for its inclusion, and did so on a bipartisan basis. You stood on the side of the public. That appropriations bill was adopted by the House, establishing the House's position in favor of public access.

But even that wasn't enough. The Congress ultimately used the mechanism of an Omnibus Appropriations bill to fund the government, and you fought for inclusion of public access to CRS reports language in that bill. And you succeeded.

Within 90 days—180 at the most—the Library of Congress must publish new and updated CRS reports on its website, following the direction set forth by your committee. This is no less than a transformation of how the public can learn about the important issues before Congress from a non-partisan, expert source. No longer will CRS reports remain the domain of the well-connected and the well-heeled. You made this happen. We cannot thank you enough.

We're not counting the proverbial chickens before they've hatched. We will be watching so see whether the Library meets its deadline and whether the website lives up to its requirements. But we are comforted knowing that you will be watching, too. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

With gratitude and appreciation,

American Association of Law Libraries
American Commitment
American Library Association

Issue One
Liberty Coalition
National Coalition for History

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Association of Research Libraries
Center for Media and Democracy
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
Coalition to Reduce Spending
Common Cause
Data Coalition
Defending Rights & Dissent
Demand Progress Action
Electronic Privacy Information Center
Free Government Information
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
GovTrack.us
Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame

National LGBTQ Task Force
National Security Archive
National Security Counselors
Niskanen Center
Northern California Association of Law Libraries
Open the Government
Participatory Politics Foundation
Project On Government Oversight
Quorum
R Street Institute
Society of American Archivists
Sunlight Foundation
Taxpayers for Common Sense
The Center for Responsive Politics
Union of Concerned Scientists

Henry Cohen
George Costello, CRS (retired)
Crystal Davidson, King University
Glennon J. Harrison, Ph.D., CRS (retired)
Eileen Heaser
Karen Heil, Middletown Thrall Library
Craig Holman, Public Citizen
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Michael A. Keller, Stanford University Libraries
Andrew Lopez, Charles E. Shain Library,
Connecticut College

Jonathan Medalia, CRS (retired)
Heather Durkin Negley
Dr. James Nichol, CRS, Foreign Affairs, Defense
and Trade Division
Betsy Palmer, Lecturer, University of Arizona and
CRS alum
Morton Rosenberg, CRS alum
Marc Rotenberg
Richard Rowberg
Daniel Schuman
Christine Scott