

**Testimony of Daniel Schuman**  
**Demand Progress Policy Director**  
**before the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch**  
**for FY 2021**

Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member Heurrera Buetler, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on a matter that would help strengthen Congress. We appreciate this Committee's ongoing efforts to improve the legislative branch's capacity. My testimony focuses on improving how Congress keeps track of the reports that it requires of federal agencies. It specifically requests: (1) additional funding for the House Clerk's office to provide for two Executive Communications clerks to expand an existing list of mandated reports, and (2) report language concerning implementation.

How many reports has Congress required of federal agencies? When are they due? Who was required to submit the report? No one knows the complete list of mandated reports.

The House of Representatives, which is aware of this issue, requires the Clerk of the House to compile a list of all reports that are due to Congress and to annually publish that list in a report that is provided to all Members of the House. This requirement, in Rule II clause 2(b), has been interpreted to extend the listmaking requirement only to reports due to the House and Senate, and not to its committees and subcommittees. We recommend expanding the requirement to all committees and subcommittees.

The House of Representatives has concurred with this recommendation. On July 17, 2019, the House of Representatives passed the *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act* (ACMRA) (H.R. 736) on a bipartisan basis and, on March 8, 2019, it passed the *For the People Act of 2019* (H.R. 1), which included the *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act* in Title IX Subtitle D. ACMRA, which has advanced many times over the preceding decade in the House of Representatives and enjoys bipartisan co-sponsors and widespread civil society support, would, among other things, require the House of Representatives to maintain a list of all reports that federal agencies must by law provide to Congress, including reports due to all committees and subcommittees.

The relevant Senate committee has favorably reported ACMRA, but the legislation is delayed over a separate provision that would require all reports be published on a central database. Even should the Senate enact ACMRA this Congress, the burden would fall on the Clerk's office to compile the expanded list of reports. The Clerk's office must be provided the resources to do so.

Accordingly, our request is twofold. First, we request that the Clerk's office expand its list of mandated reports to include reports Congress has mandated be provided to House and Senate committees and subcommittees. Second, provide additional funding for the Clerk to hire two FTEs at the level of Executive Communications Clerk to implement this new requirement. It is our understanding that this is the appropriate staffing level to accomplish this purpose.

Reports that Congress requires of agencies can often shed light on how taxpayer dollars are being used or misused in the federal government, and represent crucial resources for both lawmakers with oversight of these federal agencies and advocates outside government. The first step of making use of the reports is knowing that they exist. As the Clerk already tracks this information for reports due to either chamber, we respectfully ask that their list be expanded as is described above.

We respectfully request the following report language:

*List of Reports Due to Congress:* The Committee encourages the Clerk of the House to expand the list of reports that any officer or Department is required to make to Congress under House Rule II to include reports due to all Committees and Subcommittees of the House of Representatives and Senate, and has provided for the Clerk to hire two FTEs at the level of Executive Communications Clerk.

We also respectfully request a commensurate increase in the Clerk's appropriation.

Thank you again for your interest and the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.