

November 15 , 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: Coalition Endorsement of The Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act**

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

We, the undersigned organizations, write in strong support of the bipartisan *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act* (“ACMRA”) and urge its prompt consideration by the full Senate. The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee favorably reported the Senate version, S. 2838, on November 3, 2021, with Sens. Portman, Klobuchar, Peters, and Hassan as sponsors.<sup>1</sup>

Once enacted, *ACMRA* would strengthen congressional oversight of the Executive branch and provide much needed government transparency and accountability. Specifically, *ACMRA* would establish the first-ever public, online database of most agency reports that are statutorily required by Congress. To do this, *ACMRA* would direct the vast majority of Executive branch agencies to transmit to the Government Publishing Office reports that federal law requires them to submit to Congress; GPO will serve as a central repository. In addition, *ACMRA* would direct the compilation of most laws mandating agency reports to Congress and require GPO to track whether it has received the reports.

Committees would continue to receive the reports directly and no fewer than 30 days prior to their publication on GPO’s website. Reports and materials not otherwise eligible for public release are not directed to be published under this law, nor those submitted to certain committees, and all committees have the option to withhold specific reports from online publication. *ACMRA* does *not* expand the number of reports that can become publicly available beyond those already obtainable under the Freedom of Information Act, but would make it easier for senators and committees to obtain the vast majority of reports submitted to Congress. Noted scholar and former CRS attorney Harold Relyea described publication of mandated reports as “useful to the committee operations of the entire Congress.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Senate companion legislation is S. 2838.

<sup>2</sup> “Congress and freedom of information: A retrospective and a look at the current issue,” Harold C. Relyea (2009).  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0740624X09000628>

The *Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act* enjoys broad and longstanding congressional and public support. The House of Representatives already passed H.R. 2485 in July. Legislation with this name was first introduced in the 111th Congress and was reintroduced on a bipartisan basis in succeeding Congresses — passing the House on multiple occasions as well as being favorably reported by committee in the Senate.<sup>3</sup>

It is our fervent hope that the Senate will soon take up and pass the *ACMRA*, further strengthening Congress's oversight capabilities and adding a much-needed Executive branch accountability tool to the Legislative branch's arsenal.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further. Please contact Daniel Schuman, Policy Director for Demand Progress, at [Daniel@DemandProgress.org](mailto:Daniel@DemandProgress.org).

Sincerely yours,

American Library Association  
Americans for Prosperity  
Association of Research Libraries  
Bipartisan Policy Center Action  
Data Coalition  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
Demand Progress  
Federation of American Scientists  
Free Government Information (FGI)  
FreedomWorks  
Government Accountability Project  
Government Information Watch  
GovTrack.us  
Issue One  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
Media Alliance  
National Security Counselors  
National Taxpayers Union  
Niskanen Center  
Open The Government

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<sup>3</sup> See S. 195 (116th) (favorably reported by committee); H.R. 736 (116th) (passed House); S. 3438 (115th); H.R. 4631 (ordered to be reported by committee); H.R. 5876 (114th); H.R. 1380 (113th) (ordered to be reported by committee); S. 1411 (112th); H.R. 1974 (112th) (reported by committee); H.R. 6026 (111th).

Project On Government Oversight (POGO)  
Protect Democracy  
R Street Institute  
Senior Executives Association  
The Digital Democracy Project  
The Governance Lab  
Transparency International — U.S. Office  
Unite America

Lorelei Kelly, Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation at Georgetown\*  
Marci Harris, POPVOX\*  
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\* = Affiliation listed for identification purposes only.

cc: Sen. Rob Portman  
Sen. Amy Klobuchar  
Sen. Gary Peters  
Sen. Maggie Hassan  
Sen. Jack Reed  
Sen. James Inhofe