

**Written Testimony of Antoine McGrath**

**FY 2026 Legislative Branch Appropriations**

**Topic: Directing CRS to Release Historical Reports from its CRSX Archive**

**Submitted to: House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch**

**Date: April 4, 2025**

Dear Chair Valadao, Ranking Member Espallat, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding the public availability of non-confidential Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports. I respectfully urge the Subcommittee to include language in the FY 2026 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill directing the Library of Congress and CRS to make historical CRS reports from the CRSX archive publicly accessible online in PDF format.

This request does not require new funding. It builds on longstanding congressional goals for increased transparency and public access to legislative branch research by ensuring that CRS's valuable historical work is made publicly available.

**Why Historical CRS Reports Matter**

The CRS is a taxpayer-funded, non-partisan agency that produces rigorous, fact-based research for Congress. Since the mid-20th century, CRS has generated thousands of non-confidential reports on nearly every aspect of federal policymaking, from budget reform to presidential powers to environmental policy. These reports are indispensable

to understanding the legislative process, the evolution of federal law, and the context for congressional action.

Congress recognized the value of this work when it enacted the Equal Access to Congressional Research Service Reports Act of 2018, requiring the publication of non-confidential reports available on CRS's intranet. Yet the law did not stop there—it also gave the Library of Congress the authority to publish historical reports that were not available on CRS's intranet at the time. That authority has yet to be exercised.

### **The CRSX Archive: Digitized, Funded, and Off-Limits**

CRS has internally acknowledged that it possesses a separate archive—the CRSX system—containing more than 30,000 historical CRS reports. Many of these reports are already digitized and include metadata, yet they are not available to either Congress or the public.

In its FY 2021 report, this Subcommittee wisely directed CRS to evaluate and report on the feasibility of publishing the CRSX archive. While CRS cited a potential \$2.4 million cost and 40 FTEs for a one-year effort, such estimates appear inflated. The resource I created—CRSReports.com—was built, hosted, and funded entirely by me. It became public in 2015 and made thousands more CRS reports publicly accessible than are available on the official CRS website today, all at a fraction of the projected cost. If the true cost of making these reports public is indeed a concern, CRS should be directed to collaborate with the Government Publishing Office (GPO), which has significant experience publishing government reports efficiently and at scale.

## **The Time for Access is Now**

Historical CRS reports are not obsolete. They continue to inform congressional debate and are essential for understanding legislative history.

These reports were funded by the taxpayers and produced for Congress. They should not be locked behind an internal wall or accessible only through expensive commercial databases. Public release of these materials in PDF format would represent a major step toward transparency and accountability in line with congressional intent.

## **Recommendations**

I respectfully urge the Subcommittee to take the following actions:

- Direct the Library of Congress and CRS to release all non-confidential historical reports stored in the CRSX archive.
- Require the reports to be published online in PDF format.
- Encourage CRS to collaborate with GPO to reduce costs and accelerate release.

Making historical CRS reports available online is a low-cost, high-impact reform that will benefit Congress and the public alike. Thank you for considering this request and for your continued leadership on strengthening the legislative branch.

Respectfully submitted,

**Antoine McGrath**

Creator of CRSReports.com (2015)

Antoine@crsreports.com

(315) 683-4268