

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 4631

To require the Director of the Government Publishing Office to establish and maintain a website accessible to the public that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of all congressionally mandated reports in one place, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 12, 2017

Mr. QUIGLEY (for himself, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. BRAT, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. SOTO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To require the Director of the Government Publishing Office to establish and maintain a website accessible to the public that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of all congressionally mandated reports in one place, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Access to Congression-  
5 ally Mandated Reports Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) CONGRESSIONALLY MANDATED REPORT.—

4 The term “congressionally mandated report”—

5 (A) means a report that is required to be  
6 submitted to either House of Congress or any  
7 committee of Congress, or subcommittee there-  
8 of, by a statute, resolution, or conference report  
9 that accompanies legislation enacted into law;  
10 and

11 (B) does not include a report required  
12 under part B of subtitle II of title 36, United  
13 States Code.

14 (2) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means  
15 the Director of the Government Publishing Office.

16 (3) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal  
17 agency” has the meaning given that term under sec-  
18 tion 102 of title 40, United States Code, but does  
19 not include the Government Accountability Office.

20 (4) OPEN FORMAT.—The term “open format”  
21 means a file format for storing digital data based on  
22 an underlying open standard that—

23 (A) is not encumbered by any restrictions  
24 that would impede reuse; and

1 (B) is based on an underlying open data  
2 standard that is maintained by a standards or-  
3 ganization.

4 (5) REPORTS WEBSITE.—The term “reports  
5 website” means the website established under section  
6 (3)(a).

7 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF WEBSITE FOR CONGRESSION-**  
8 **ALLY MANDATED REPORTS.**

9 (a) REQUIREMENT TO ESTABLISH WEBSITE.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
11 the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall  
12 establish and maintain a website accessible by the  
13 public that allows the public to obtain electronic cop-  
14 ies of all congressionally mandated reports in one  
15 place. The Director may publish other reports on the  
16 website.

17 (2) EXISTING FUNCTIONALITY.—To the extent  
18 possible, the Director shall meet the requirements  
19 under paragraph (1) by using existing websites and  
20 functionality under the authority of the Director.

21 (3) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this Act,  
22 the Director shall consult with the Clerk of the  
23 House of Representatives, the Secretary of the Sen-  
24 ate, and the Librarian of Congress regarding the re-

1        requirements for and maintenance of congressionally  
2        mandated reports on the reports website.

3        (b) CONTENT AND FUNCTION.—The Director shall  
4        ensure that the reports website includes the following:

5                (1) Subject to subsection (c), with respect to  
6                each congressionally mandated report, each of the  
7                following:

8                        (A) A citation to the statute, conference  
9                        report, or resolution requiring the report.

10                      (B) An electronic copy of the report, in-  
11                      cluding any transmittal letter associated with  
12                      the report, in an open format that is platform  
13                      independent and that is available to the public  
14                      without restrictions, including restrictions that  
15                      would impede the re-use of the information in  
16                      the report.

17                      (C) The ability to retrieve a report, to the  
18                      extent practicable, through searches based on  
19                      each, and any combination, of the following:

20                                (i) The title of the report.

21                                (ii) The reporting Federal agency.

22                                (iii) The date of publication.

23                                (iv) Each congressional committee re-  
24                                ceiving the report, if applicable.

1 (v) The statute, resolution, or con-  
2 ference report requiring the report.

3 (vi) Subject tags.

4 (vii) A unique alphanumeric identifier  
5 for the report that is consistent across re-  
6 port editions.

7 (viii) The serial number, Super-  
8 intendent of Documents number, or other  
9 identification number for the report, if ap-  
10 plicable.

11 (ix) Key words.

12 (x) Full text search.

13 (xi) Any other relevant information  
14 specified by the Director.

15 (D) The date on which the report was re-  
16 quired to be submitted, and on which the report  
17 was submitted, to the reports website.

18 (E) Access to the report not later than 30  
19 calendar days after its submission to Congress.

20 (F) To the extent practicable, a permanent  
21 means of accessing the report electronically.

22 (2) A means for bulk download of all congress-  
23 sionally mandated reports.

24 (3) A means for downloading individual reports  
25 as the result of a search.

1           (4) An electronic means for the head of each  
2 Federal agency to submit to the reports website each  
3 congressionally mandated report of the agency, as  
4 required by section 4.

5           (5) In tabular form, a list of all congressionally  
6 mandated reports that can be searched, sorted, and  
7 downloaded by—

8           (A) reports submitted within the required  
9 time;

10           (B) reports submitted after the date on  
11 which such reports were required to be sub-  
12 mitted; and

13           (C) reports not submitted.

14       (c) NONCOMPLIANCE BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

15           (1) REPORTS NOT SUBMITTED.—If a Federal  
16 agency does not submit a congressionally mandated  
17 report to the Director, the Director shall to the ex-  
18 tent practicable—

19           (A) include on the reports website—

20           (i) the information required under  
21 clauses (i), (ii), (iv), and (v) of subsection  
22 (b)(1)(C); and

23           (ii) the date on which the report was  
24 required to be submitted; and

1 (B) include the congressionally mandated  
2 report on the list described in subsection  
3 (b)(5)(C).

4 (2) REPORTS NOT IN OPEN FORMAT.—If a Fed-  
5 eral agency submits a congressionally mandated re-  
6 port that is not in an open format, the Director shall  
7 include the congressionally mandated report in an-  
8 other format on the reports website.

9 (d) FREE ACCESS.—The Director may not charge a  
10 fee, require registration, or impose any other limitation  
11 in exchange for access to the reports website.

12 (e) UPGRADE CAPABILITY.—The reports website  
13 shall be enhanced and updated as necessary to carry out  
14 the purposes of this Act.

15 **SEC. 4. FEDERAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES.**

16 (a) SUBMISSION OF ELECTRONIC COPIES OF RE-  
17 PORTS.—Concurrently with the submission to Congress of  
18 each congressionally mandated report, the head of the  
19 Federal agency submitting the congressionally mandated  
20 report shall submit to the Director the information re-  
21 quired under subparagraphs (A) through (D) of section  
22 3(b)(1) with respect to the congressionally mandated re-  
23 port. Nothing in this Act shall relieve a Federal agency  
24 of any other requirement to publish the congressionally  
25 mandated report on the website of the Federal agency or

1 otherwise submit the congressionally mandated report to  
2 Congress or specific committees of Congress, or sub-  
3 committees thereof.

4 (b) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 240 days after the  
5 date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office  
6 of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Di-  
7 rector, shall issue guidance to agencies on the implementa-  
8 tion of this Act.

9 (c) STRUCTURE OF SUBMITTED REPORT DATA.—  
10 The head of each Federal agency shall ensure that each  
11 congressionally mandated report submitted to the Director  
12 complies with the open format criteria established by the  
13 Director in the guidance issued under subsection (b).

14 (d) POINT OF CONTACT.—The head of each Federal  
15 agency shall designate a point of contact for congression-  
16 ally mandated report.

17 (e) LIST OF REPORTS.—As soon as practicable each  
18 calendar year (but not later than April 1), and on a rolling  
19 basis during the year if feasible, the Librarian of Congress  
20 shall submit to the Director a list of congressionally man-  
21 dated reports from the previous calendar year, in consulta-  
22 tion with the Clerk of the House of Representatives, which  
23 shall—

24 (1) be provided in an open format;



1           (2) include the information required under  
2           clauses (i), (ii), (iv), (v) of section 3(b)(1)(C) for  
3           each report;

4           (3) include the frequency of the report;

5           (4) include a unique alphanumeric identifier for  
6           the report that is consistent across report editions;

7           (5) include the date on which each report is re-  
8           quired to be submitted; and

9           (6) be updated and provided to the Director, as  
10          necessary.

11 **SEC. 5. REMOVING AND ALTERING REPORTS.**

12          A report submitted to be published to the reports  
13 website may only be changed or removed, with the excep-  
14 tion of technical changes, by the head of the Federal agen-  
15 cy concerned if—

16           (1) the head of the Federal agency consults  
17           with each congressional committee to which the re-  
18           port is submitted; and

19           (2) Congress enacts a joint resolution author-  
20           izing the changing or removal of the report.

21 **SEC. 6. RELATIONSHIP TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMA-**  
22 **TION ACT.**

23          (a) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this Act shall be con-  
24          strued to require the disclosure of information or records  
25          that are exempt from public disclosure under section 552

1 of title 5, United States Code, or to impose any affirmative  
2 duty on the Director to review congressionally mandated  
3 reports submitted for publication to the reports website  
4 for the purpose of identifying and redacting such informa-  
5 tion or records.

6 (b) REDACTION OF REPORT.—With respect to each  
7 congressionally mandated report, the head of each relevant  
8 Federal agency shall redact any information that may not  
9 be publicly released under section 552(b) of title 5, United  
10 States Code, before submission for publication on the re-  
11 ports website, and shall—

12 (1) redact only such information from the re-  
13 port;

14 (2) identify where any such redaction is made  
15 in the report; and

16 (3) identify the exemption under which each  
17 such redaction is made.

18 (c) WITHHOLDING INFORMATION.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—A Federal agency—

20 (A) may withhold information otherwise re-  
21 quired to be disclosed under this Act only if—

22 (i) the Federal agency reasonably  
23 foresees that disclosure would harm an in-  
24 terest protected by an exemption described

1 in section 552(b) of title 5, United States  
2 Code; or

3 (ii) disclosure is prohibited by law;  
4 and

5 (B) shall—

6 (i) consider whether partial disclosure  
7 of information otherwise required to be dis-  
8 closed under this Act is possible whenever  
9 the Federal agency determines that a full  
10 disclosure of the information is not pos-  
11 sible; and

12 (ii) take reasonable steps necessary to  
13 segregate and release nonexempt informa-  
14 tion.

15 (2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this  
16 subsection requires disclosure of information that is  
17 otherwise prohibited from disclosure by law, or oth-  
18 erwise exempted from disclosure under section  
19 552(b)(3) of title 5, United States Code.

20 **SEC. 7. IMPLEMENTATION.**

21 Except as provided in section 4(c), this Act shall be  
22 implemented not later than 1 year after the date of enact-  
23 ment of this Act and shall apply with respect to congress-

- 1 sionally mandated reports submitted to Congress on or
- 2 after the date that is 1 year after such date of enactment.

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