

April 23, 2012

Members of the House of Representatives:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing in strong support of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act), H.R. 2146, which is planned for a floor vote this Wednesday. The DATA Act is an important step towards improving federal financial transparency and would empower the public to better understand how their federal dollars are being spent.

Currently available data on federal spending is incomplete and inconsistent. The DATA Act would centralize and simplify the convoluted spending reporting standards so that every government agency reports their spending in the same way. Importantly, the bill also includes uniform reporting from recipients of federal funds. All of this information will be readily available to the public.

The DATA Act establishes an independent commission responsible for publishing and monitoring federal spending, modeled after the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board. It also sets consistent government-wide standards for financial data reporting. Its enactment will greatly improve the scope, granularity, timeliness, usefulness, and accuracy of public reports on federal spending beyond what is currently available.

Concerns many of us expressed with earlier versions of the legislation have been addressed. For example, the bill provides for the continuity of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act and USAspending.gov. It ensures that reporting requirements will persist even if the Commission sunsets. It requires prime federal award recipients to identify all sub-awards, and expands Treasury Department reporting requirements. It also strengthens the Government Accountability Office's ability to obtain certain agency records.

This bill, introduced by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), cosponsored by Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) and 13 others, was passed unanimously by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, and enjoys strong bipartisan support.

We urge that you be present and vote "yes" on the DATA Act to shine a light on the spending of our tax dollars.

For more information, please contact Daniel Schuman of the Sunlight Foundation at [202-742-1520](tel:202-742-1520) X 273 (dschuman@sunlightfoundation.com), Angela Canterbury of the Project on Government Oversight at [202-347-1122](tel:202-347-1122) (acanterbury@pogo.org), or Sam Rosen-Amy of OMB Watch at 202-234-8494 or (srosenamy@ombwatch.org).

Center for Responsive Politics
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Cost of Government Center
Data Transparency Coalition
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Fore See
Global Financial Integrity
iSolon.org
Jubilee USA Network
Liberty Coalition
Missionary Oblates US Province
National Freedom of Information Coalition
National Priorities Project
OMB Watch
OpenTheGovernment.org
Progressive Librarians Guild
Tabulaw Inc.
Taxpayers for Common Sense Action
Taxpayers Protection Alliance
The Sunlight Foundation
U.S. Transparency
Washington Coalition for Open Government
WashingtonWatch.com