

July 12, 2013

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives

Re: FY 2014 Appropriations for the Electronic Government Fund

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

We are writing to urge you to restore funding and independence to the Electronic Government Fund at the General Services Administration in the financial services and general government appropriations bill for fiscal year 2014. As approved by subcommittee, **the bill would not provide adequate funding for the E-Gov Fund's important programs**, which provide critical support for the construction of a more transparent and efficient government and serve as a building block for private-sector innovations that create high-tech jobs. The proposed funding would also reduce accountability for funded projects by removing them from reporting requirements under the E-Government Act (P. L. 107-347).

**The E-Gov Fund has a proven track record of successful transparency projects that have delivered efficiency improvements and increased government accountability.** For instance, USAspending.gov and the IT Dashboard have helped root out government waste and inefficiency and recently led to the elimination of some \$3 billion in failing technology projects. Performance.gov enables the public to monitor agency progress in cutting waste, streamlining government, and improving performance..

In addition, **E-Gov Fund projects provide the framework for vibrant private-sector business and job creation.** The thousands of government data sets now available through Data.gov are building blocks for innovative new IT products. For instance, the search engine Bing now integrates Medicare quality data into searches for hospitals. Brightscope, a start-up company, has raised \$2 million in venture capital and created 30 jobs through their analysis of retirement plan data from the Department of Labor.

**Cuts to the E-Gov Fund will hinder these successful projects.** Needed upgrades to increase transparency and improve data quality will have to be delayed or abandoned, which will hamper efforts to make government more efficient and transparent.

These cuts are penny-wise and pound-foolish. The E-Gov Fund supports powerful tools for reducing waste, fraud, and abuse and for creating private-sector jobs. Given appropriate funding, these projects result in benefits far in excess of their costs.

To support continued transparency, efficiency, and job creation, **we respectfully urge you to restore full funding for the E-Gov Fund.** In particular, we ask you to provide at least the president's recommendation of \$20.15 million to preserve these important programs.

We also ask that the **E-Gov Fund remain independent** from the Federal Citizen Services Fund. Because the proposed Information and Engagement for Citizens account would not be subject to the reporting requirements of the E-Government Act of 2002 at 44 U.S.C. § 3604(f) and has not been authorized by Congress, combining the funds would decrease government transparency and accountability.

We appreciate your time and attention to this issue. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue further, please contact Gavin Baker of the Center for Effective Government at (202) 234-8494.

Sincerely yours,

Center for Effective Government (formerly OMB Watch)  
The Sunlight Foundation