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Americans for Less Secrecy, More Democracy



Press Release

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Report Tracks Secrecy and Openness in Bush and Obama Administrations

WASHINGTON, Sept. 8, 2009 – The **2009 Secrecy Report Card** chronicles slight decreases in secrecy across a wide spectrum of indicators in the last year of the Bush-Cheney Administration. The report, released today by a coalition of more than 70 open government advocates, also provides a six-month overview of the Obama Administration’s promise and practice on openness issues, and a section on financial transparency during the economic crisis.

According to Patrice McDermott, Director of OpenTheGovernment.org, “Promising trends began to develop in the last year of the Bush Administration, but we have a long way to go to return to the level of government openness and accountability that existed before the September 11 attacks.”

While very few quantitative indicators of secrecy exist yet to compare the Obama Administration to its predecessor, the Special Section on the Obama Administration uses qualitative examples to discuss the Administration’s openness promising policies and, in some instances, discouraging practice. Among the issues discussed are: the Open Government Directive, Classified Information, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), signing statements, use of state secrets, and more.

“The Obama administration so far has a very mixed record on its promise of unprecedented openness,” said McDermott. “We look forward to working with the Administration toward meeting this goal, and will continue to work to make sure the public has the information it needs to hold this Administration accountable.”

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OpenTheGovernment.org is a coalition, transcending party lines, of more than 70 consumer and good government groups, librarians, environmentalists, labor, journalists, and others focused on pushing back governmental secrecy and promoting openness.

Read the report here:

http://www.openthegovernment.org/otg/SecrecyRC_2009.pdf

www.openthegovernment.org

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