



Press Release

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Report: Administration's Openness Agenda Shows Some Positive Results, National Security Bureaucracy Hinders Change

WASHINGTON, Sept. 6, 2011 – The **2011 Secrecy Report** released today by [OpenTheGovernment.org](http://www.openthegovernment.org) – a coalition of more than 80 groups advocating for open and accountable government– chronicles positive changes in some indicators of secrecy during the Obama Administration. The indicators tracked by the report, however, also show a national security bureaucracy that defies this trend and continues to expand the secret government.

This year's edition also includes a "Progress Report on Openness and Secrecy in the Obama Administration." According to Patrice McDermott, Director of OpenTheGovernment.org, "We are not as yet at the level of 'unprecedented transparency' the Obama Administration promises, but we are beginning to see signs that at least some of the Administration's openness efforts are paying off."

Among the positive trends highlighted by the Secrecy Report, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) backlogs government-wide were reduced by 10% in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 compared to FY 2009. President Obama is the only President for whom we have records who has not asserted Executive Privilege to deny Congressional requests for information. Additionally, the number of times President Obama has used a signing statement to challenge specific aspects of a new law is significantly lower than other modern presidents. And, in unprecedented moves, the Obama Administration has declassified and released information about the U.S. nuclear stockpile, our nuclear posture review, and the full size of the national intelligence budget.

The Administration's openness agenda has not been fully embraced by the national security bureaucracy, however. The report highlights how, two years after the effective date of the President's Executive Order on Classified National Security Information, only a few agencies are taking the required Fundamental Classification Guidance Review process very seriously, with others ignoring or deferring it. The amount of classified material created annually by the government stays well above that created prior to 2000, and the declassification system continues to fall farther behind.

Keeping track of the Administration's commitments takes on new significance with the creation of the new international Open Government Partnership, in which the US and other governments will deliver concrete national action plans, developed with public consultation and feedback. Dr. McDermott said, "We are excited to both work with the government to develop a national action plan for making the government more open and accountable, and then work to ensure its implementation."

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OpenTheGovernment.org is a coalition, transcending party lines, of more than 80 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/sites/default/files/SRC_2011.pdf

www.openthegovernment.org

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