

**Statement
Of
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Before the United States Committee on the Judiciary

On:

Open Government and Freedom of Information:
Reinvigorating the Freedom of Information Act for the Digital Age

Thank you, Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Grassley, and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to speak today about reinvigorating the Freedom of Information Act and for your unwavering commitment to protecting and strengthening the public's right to know. My name is Amy Bennett and I am the Assistant Director of OpenTheGovernment.org, a coalition of more than eighty organizations dedicated to openness and accountability.

As we all know too well, currently the FOIA is anything but an effective and efficient tool that the public can use to get timely access to government records. Members of the public must contend with delays, mind-boggling technical barriers, and a tradition of bureaucratic resistance to disclosure of information because some agency officials believe it belongs to the agency, not the people.

We certainly can make changes to the process that will make the system work better, and I want to thank this Committee for its long history of bipartisan support for improving the FOIA, and for shining a bright light on some of these issues over the past few years by advancing Chairman Leahy and Senator Cornyn's bill, FASTER FOIA. We agree a comprehensive review of agency backlogs in processing FOIA requests is long overdue, and we hope to see Congress require that the soon-to-be-established Federal Advisory Committee on FOIA Modernization or some other body complete this important study.

Later in this testimony, I will address some of the changes that the open government community believes will make the most positive difference for requesters. I am also appending a much more comprehensive list of reforms that the open government community would like to see the Committee act on.

There is no doubt that technology is a part of the solution: technology has proven to be extremely useful in speeding FOIA processing while also making it easier for the public to use and re-use government information. In recent years, technical innovations like FOIAonline, the central portal currently used by several agencies to accept and fulfill requests, have made it simpler for the public to track and manage requests, and receive usable documents. We are optimistic about the Administration's recent commitments to expand the use of a single portal for FOIA requests and to create a Federal Advisory Committee on FOIA Modernization, and hope to see fruits of these commitments soon.

Technology is not the entire answer, however, and I want to use my time before you today to speak about the need for Congress to weigh-in in favor of requesters on some of the natural tensions embedded in the law. These are tensions that the Judiciary Committee is uniquely suited to address, and we hope that the Committee will approve amendments to the FOIA addressing the issues raised below.

Foremost among these, the open government community would like to see Congress put tighter boundaries around the government's over-use of FOIA's Exemption 5, or as many FOIA requesters refer to it, the "We don't want to give it to you" exemption. Exemption 5 is intended to protect the government's deliberative process, among other things, and was intended to have – as are all FOIA Exemptions – narrow application. Over time, federal agencies have expanded the scope of material they consider subject to Exemption 5 to the point that it covers practically anything that is not a final version of a document. In one particularly egregious example of the government's over-use of Exemption 5, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) denied a request from our coalition partner the National Security Archive for the last secret volume of the CIA's internal history of the 1961 Bay of Pigs disaster. The request was denied despite the fact that the draft is connected to no policy decision by CIA and related to events that occurred more than 50 years ago.¹ Exemption 5 has also recently been invoked to deny the public access to copies of opinions by the Office of Legal Counsel related to the legality of controversial programs like the use of drones to kill American citizens abroad² and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's ability to access American's telephone records beyond what the letter of the public law allows.³ While we understand the need to allow the President's advisors the freedom to give the President off-the-record advice, we cannot sanction the government's use of secret interpretations of the law to instruct the operations of executive agencies. Moreover, such practices erode the public's trust in the executive branch and its decisions.

For organizations like mine that care about accountability and reporters like those represented by Mr. Cuillier, pre-decisional documents are critical to understanding how a policy has changed and who is influencing the government's decisions. In terms of needed reforms to Exemption 5, we can draw two lessons from the above examples. One, Exemption 5 needs a public interest balancing test. If the government were not convinced that the requested documents would advance the public interest, a requester would still have the opportunity to ask a Court to independently weigh the government needs in invoking the privilege against the needs of the requester. Two, there needs to be a time limit. Currently, a President's records are only protected from release for twelve years from the end of that presidency. Surely, we should not accord more secrecy to agency business than we accord the President of the United States.

The next critical issue relates to the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). As you know, the open government community strongly supported the creation of the office, and we very much appreciate this Committee's leadership in creating the office and giving it early crucial support. OGIS is doing great things, and OGIS staff has a strong working relationship with members of my community. You likely will not be surprised, however, when I tell you OGIS continues to struggle to meet its dual roles as FOIA mediator and as the office charged with reviewing agency compliance with the FOIA and recommending changes to Congress and the President.

¹ <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB450/>

² <http://pogoblog.typepad.com/pogo/2011/11/foia-friday-justice-dept-denies-foia-request-for-awlaki-assassination-memo.html>

³ <https://www.eff.org/press/archives/2011/05/19>

The first limitation faced by OGIS should be abundantly clear to this Committee thanks to Senator Grassley's sharp questioning during last year's FOIA oversight hearing: OGIS does not have the freedom to report directly to Congress or the President. It should not take a threat by a Senator to drive down to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to ensure that OGIS's recommendations are delivered in a timely fashion. Giving OGIS direct reporting authority would allow the office to provide information more freely to you and the President as to problems OGIS consistently sees during its mediation and review efforts, and advise on how these issues should be addressed.

The second limitation is the age-old problem of resources. Right now the office consists of a staff of seven – seven people to deal with more than 99 different agency FOIA offices and to help the hundreds of thousands of members of the public who file FOIA requests. Thankfully, we understand OGIS soon will be adding three new staff who will be responsible for helping set and execute OGIS' review of agency compliance with FOIA. This will help OGIS maintain its position as a neutral arbiter in its casework. However, OGIS needs several more bodies, as well as new resources to help promote and support the office's work. My community believes that at least two new positions should be approved to include a Director of Enforcement and a Director of Operations. This would strengthen OGIS' ability to implement its dual roles. We also urge Congress to designate at least one of the newly-created positions at OGIS as exempt from federal hiring rules to ensure qualified experts from outside the government can be fully considered.

The third and final limitation currently faced by OGIS that I will discuss today is its lack of authority to compel agencies to participate in the mediation process. Currently, OGIS and a requester that seeks OGIS's assistance must rely on the good will of an agency involved in a dispute. The most recent report on OGIS by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) documents OGIS's inability to provide mediation services to a requester because the agency declined to cooperate with OGIS.⁴ For OGIS to serve all requesters who seek mediation services, Congress should require agencies to cooperate with OGIS and to provide information if requested.

Another long-standing issue facing FOIA advocates that needs your attention is the frequent appearance of new statutes that allow agencies to withhold information relying on Exemption 3 of the FOIA. According to data compiled by the Sunshine in Government Initiative and made available by ProPublica, a list of watermelon growers and handlers that submit information about the size of their business in order to participate in the National Watermelon Promotion Board, and information concerning the specific location of significant caves are just some of the 100-odd types of information that have been withheld from FOIA requesters using provisions of laws that are otherwise unrelated to the public's right to know.⁵ These provisions are often introduced as only a few lines of text in a massive spending or authorization bill and, because they do not amend the FOIA, Committees with expertise like this one are not given the opportunity to weigh in on the need for or potential scope of the provision.

Recently Congress took the common-sense approach of including a public interest balancing test in a provision that excluded information about the Department of Defense's critical infrastructure. This balancing test will ensure the public's ability to access documents like water quality reports that are critical to human health and safety. Congress should amend Exemption 3 to say that no information may be withheld under this section

⁴ <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-650>

⁵ <http://projects.propublica.org/foia-exemptions/>

unless the prospective harm to the interest of the government clearly outweighs the value of disclosure to the public. In addition, Congress can help eliminate unnecessary withholding statutes by requiring each such statute include a sunset. This sunset should give agencies sufficient time to make sure information that truly needs ongoing protection can continue to be withheld.

A fourth reform is both rhetorically important and a common-sense solution to make FOIA a more efficient public access tool: requiring agencies to make all records they process for release publicly available. While FOIA is called a public access tool, a lot of the documents that go through the FOIA process are never made publicly available. The only person who ever sees the documents is the person who filed the request. With a few exceptions, released documents are not required to be publicly available until they have been requested, or are expected to be requested, three times. In practice, this requirement is essentially meaningless as few agencies have a reliable method for tracking how many times a record has been released. Furthermore, we know a single agency sometimes reviews the same document multiple times and makes different withholding decisions each time.⁶ Having an agency process a document multiple times wastes our scarce government resources. Simply by mandating that a release to one is a release to all, Congress can make sure that the general public has the ability to benefit from the release of documents through FOIA and can eliminate all of this unpredictability and wasteful duplication of efforts.

Of course, we also recognize that FOIA requesters should be rewarded in some way for their initiative in requesting information, and the picture is complicated by the fact some FOIA requesters must pay fees to have their requests processed. It is particularly important for journalists and other organizations to be able to have some time when they have exclusive access to the information. The process for releasing all reviewed documents recently adopted by the Department of State respects the need for exclusivity by posting its records quarterly, meaning recipients have up to three months before the document is publicly available. FOIAonline also gives the agency the option to make all of the released records public on a large central repository. People interested in seeing what has been released on a particular issue can search the repository; requesters are sent a direct link to the released documents.

The last reform I want to discuss is another common-sense solution to bringing more certainty into the FOIA process, and making a strong statement in favor of the public's right to know: codifying a strong presumption of openness. As you know, recent Administrations have taken different approaches in how they instruct agencies about when to withhold information from the public. Under President Bush, agencies were encouraged to use any exemption that allowed them to withhold information, with a promise the Department of Justice would defend those withholdings. President Obama's memo on FOIA, on the other hand, directs agencies to apply FOIA with a presumption that the information should be released. Congress has been far more consistent in its view of FOIA by recognizing, through the findings of the OPEN Government Act,⁷ the FOIA's presumption of openness.

Writing the presumption of openness into the law would encourage agencies to faithfully and consistently be more open. Congress should also stress that information that can be released without causing harm should be released. This can be accomplished by specifying that an agency may withhold information only if it reasonably

⁶ <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB420/>

⁷ <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-110publ175/html/PLAW-110publ175.htm>

foresees a specific identifiable harm to an interest protected by an exemption, or if disclosure is prohibited by law, and requiring the agency to identify specifically and document that harm.

OpenTheGovernment.org and our Partners are eager to work with you to craft a strong bill that makes FOIA work better for the public. As I referenced earlier, I have appended a longer list of possible reforms that the open government community would like to see enacted to this testimony. Additionally, we think there are several good ideas to improve FOIA in the bill recently passed by the House. Attached to this testimony is a letter signed by more than twenty-five organizations, including OpenTheGovernment.org, endorsing the bill and calling attention to particularly good provisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about this critical issue, and I look forward to answering any of your questions.

Attachment A: List of Reforms Supported by the Open Government Community

Improving Implementation of past FOIA reforms

- **Require online posting of all released records.** Agencies use a lot of resources reviewing the same record for release under the FOIA multiple times before it is posted publicly. The **E-FOIA Amendments of 1996** required agencies to post “frequently requested” records, which the Department of Justice defines as “three or more” requests for the same or essentially similar record. However, many agencies do not have a reliable system to track how many times a document has been released and overall there is haphazard compliance with OMB’s interpretation of “frequently requested.” We recommend the Committee amend the text to require agencies to post any document that has been released under the FOIA.
- **Close the fee loophole.** Despite the clear intent of Congress in the **2007 OPEN Government Act**, agencies have been exploiting a loophole in the law to charge requesters fees after the agency has missed its statutory deadline to respond. We recommend the Committee amend the language to clarify that if an agency claims there are “unusual or exceptional circumstances” preventing it from meeting the 20-day deadline, the agency cannot charge fees if it fails to respond within the 10-day extension.
- **Improve FOIA tracking.** Agency efforts to meet the **OPEN Government Act’s** requirement to provide requesters with a way to track FOIA requests have been uneven. Agencies should be required to have an online tracking system that enables users to immediately locate where the request is in the process, who is responsible for processing the requests (once assigned), how to contact the reviewer, and a realistic estimate of a release date.
- **Make FOIA everyone’s job.** Despite Congress expressing an interest in including FOIA performance in federal employee job reviews in the **OPEN Government Act**, the Administration has yet to take any positive steps in that direction. We recommend the Committee include language that would create an incentive for program officers and other agency personnel to understand their obligations under FOIA, and cooperate with FOIA offices.
- **Codify a strong presumption of openness.** Through the findings of the **OPEN Government Act**, Congress recognized the FOIA’s presumption of openness. Codifying the presumption in the law would encourage agencies to faithfully and consistently apply the presumption. We strongly recommend that the Committee codify the current Administration’s presumption of openness into the law, and specify an agency may withhold information only if it reasonably foresees a specific identifiable harm to an interest protected by an exemption, or if disclosure is prohibited by law.
- **Strengthen OGIS.** Congress created the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) in the **OPEN Government Act** to mediate FOIA disputes and make recommendations for improving the government’s FOIA process. As was apparent during the Judiciary Committee’s 2012 oversight hearing, OGIS lacks sufficient independence, authority, and resources to fully complete its dual mission. In order to strengthen OGIS and make sure it can carry out its statutory purpose, we recommend:
 - **Increase independence.** OGIS has the statutory responsibility to make recommendations for improving FOIA processing to the Congress and the President. During the Judiciary Committee’s 2012 oversight hearing, the Committee raised the lengthy delay in the Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB) review of OGIS’ recommendations. In order to make sure OGIS is able to provide timely recommendations, we recommend the Committee give OGIS the ability to report directly to the Congress and the President.

- **Require cooperation.** According to a recent report on OGIS by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), OGIS was not able to provide mediation services to a requester because the agency declined to cooperate with OGIS.⁸ In order to make sure OGIS is able to serve all requesters who seek mediation services, we recommend the Committee require agencies to cooperate with OGIS and to provide information if requested.
- **Increase resources.** A report by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Inspector General (IG) on OGIS stated that additional resources could significantly improve OGIS’s ability to address and meet its dual mission of providing mediation services and recommendations.⁹ In particular, the report identifies OGIS’ need for additional staff so that OGIS staff working with agencies who request OGIS assistance can be segregated from OGIS staff reviewing agencies’ FOIA policies, procedures, and compliance with FOIA. We recommend that the Committee increase OGIS’ resources by adding additional required staff, and that Congress require the creation of specific positions, including a Director of Enforcement and a Director of Operations. Congress should also designate some of the newly-created position at OGIS as exempt from federal hiring rules to ensure that qualified experts from outside the government can be considered.
- **Newly-proposed b(3) provisions must cite the FOIA.** Not all proposed b(3) provisions are complying with **OPEN FOIA Act of 2009’s** requirement that all new b(3) provisions to cite the FOIA. We recommend the Committee include language in its bill directing agencies to give no effect to newly-passed b(3) provisions that do not cite FOIA.
- **Clarify the definition of a financial institution in Exemption 8.** In a recent court decision, a judge warned that language included in **S. 3717** (passed and signed into law in 2010) to narrow the overly-broad b(3) exemption for the SEC included in the Dodd-Frank Act is being used by the SEC to inappropriately withhold information.¹⁰ We recommend repealing 15 U.S.C. § 78x(e), which defines any entity regulated, supervised, or examined by the SEC as a “financial institution” for the purpose of Ex. 8 and has proved far too broad in scope. If that proves too difficult, we might consider narrowly defining which specific entities should be entitled to *per se* recognition as “financial institutions.”
- **Update of FOIA regulations.** As the Judiciary Committee highlighted in its 2013 hearing, a recent audit by the National Security Archive revealed a majority of agencies do not have updated regulations that reflect the latest changes to law and Administration policy,. Agencies should be required to review and update all FOIA regulations so that they conform with the updated presumption of openness, and all other requirements of the law. Agencies should be required to update their regulations within 180 days of an amendment to the FOIA. Agencies also should be required to consult with OGIS on proposed updates and gather public input through the regular notice and comment process.

Reforms to make processing more efficient:

- **Require all agencies to perform a declassification review.** The Departments of Defense, Justice and Homeland Security currently review records for declassification prior to asserting Exemption b(1). This practice helps ensure

⁸ <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-650>

⁹ <http://www.archives.gov/oig/pdf/2012/audit-report-12-14.pdf>

¹⁰ This section was amended by P.L.111-257 to replace an earlier, broader exemption, with the intent to ensure that hedge funds would be treated as financial institutions, but the SEC has since relied upon it to shield information relating to the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority. See *Public Investors Arbitration Bar Ass’n v. SEC*, No. 11-2285, 2013 WL 987769, at *9, Slip Op. at *17 (D.D.C. Mar. 14, 2013) (“This amendment, passed by Congress in 2010, was intended to improve transparency” at the SEC but “appears to have done just the opposite” (internal quotation marks omitted)).

the agency does not deny the public access to records that are marked classified, even if the information does not meet the standards for classification laid out in Executive Order 13526 governing classified national security information. This should be the practice at all agencies that hold classified information.

- **Simplify fees.** We recommend amending the statute to include within the definition of “educational institution” any organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3 organization. This will ensure the fee categories are applied as Congress intended.
- **Reduce the number of b(3) provisions.** Exemption b(3) provisions make it easy to deny access to information the public needs. We need a better understanding of what provisions are in existing laws and a better way to identify newly-proposed provisions to guard against b(3) provisions that hurt public health and safety or other interests.

In order to create a definitive inventory of b(3) provisions already in statutes and a systematic way to know when new b(3) provisions are added, we recommend the Government Accountability Office (GAO) perform an audit of all existing b(3) statutes, and their use by agencies. The GAO’s results should be available to the public and should form the basis of a newly required online log of existing and proposed b(3) statutes to be maintained by the Department of Justice (DOJ) on FOIA.gov or a similar website.

- **Create a Chief FOIA Officers Council.** We strongly recommend the creation of a Chief FOIA Officers Council to monitor agency implementation of the law and recommend changes in agency policy and practices. This body will be a permanent structure that will ensure Chief FOIA Officers are engaged in their agencies’ FOIA operations. OGIS and the Office of Information Policy should co-chair the Council; this will afford OGIS a direct line of communication to the agency Chief FOIA officers, which it currently lacks.
- **Mandate a centralized FOIA portal.** FOIAonline is a promising effort to centralize the FOIA process for requesters and streamline processing for the government. However, it, or any other centralized portal, will only be successful if participation is mandated. The Committee should require agencies to participate. If an agency is using proprietary software, the switch to the centralized portal would happen at contract expiration. A small amount of funding will be contributed from each participating agency, allowing for significant upgrades to the functionality of the platform.
- **Reduce the FOIA burden by identifying and proactively disclosing whole record categories.** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) noted that it was receiving a substantial number of FOIA requests for environmental hazard information related to specific properties being considered for real estate transactions. The agency created an online tool (via MyPropertyInfo) to give the public direct access to such records. As a result, the agency charted a 27% reduction in “no records” responses. The practice of identifying categories of records that are commonly requested and making those records proactively available should be both more common and systematic. We recommend that the Committee require that within 180 days agencies that receive more than 1,000 requests per year analyze a random sample of their FOIA logs to determine what two categories of records are most often requested by non-commercial requesters and what one category of records is most requested by commercial requesters. The identified categories and supporting analysis must be submitted to OGIS for review and approval. Once approved, each agency should be required to begin proactively posting the three categories of information online within two years. Additionally, agencies should submit three additional categories to OGIS for approval two years after enactment of the bill, and make the approved categories available within two years. Five years after enactment of this bill, OGIS should be required to report to Congress on the progress agencies are making.

Transformative changes to improve the FOIA

- **Narrow the application of Exemption b(5).** Agencies use exemption b(5) to withhold a broad swath of material that is crucial to understanding what the government has done and why. We recommend the statute be revised to require agencies to consider the public interest in disclosure and balance that interest against the agency interest in withholding. We further recommend that the application of the exemption be limited to 12 years after the record was created to ensure the reach of b(5) under the FOIA is no greater than the protection afforded presidential records under the Presidential Records Act.
- **Public interest balancing test for all b(3) provisions.** Based on the precedent Chairman Leahy set in recent b(3) provisions, the incorporation of a public interest balancing test. In addition, b(3) provisions should have a sunset to ensure unnecessary ones are not continued. The sunset should give agencies sufficient time to make sure information that truly needs protection is withheld.
- **Create an Advisory Committee on Open Government that is required to conduct the study included in FASTER FOIA.** A standing Advisory Committee on Open Government would create an infrastructure to help make sure that open government work continues in spite of the Executive Branch's loss of enthusiasm or even disdain for transparency. We recommend that the Committee add a new title to the bill that directs the General Services Administration or the National Archives and Records Administration to establish an Advisory Committee on Open Government charged with advising the government on how to improve FOIA and government transparency. The advisory committee should include representatives certain members of the public,¹¹ the Department of Justice, OGIS, and the Advisory Committee should be composed of no more than 50 percent government members. We also support the bill by Senators Leahy and Cornyn to establish an advisory panel to examine agency backlogs in processing FOIA requests and provide recommendations to Congress for legislative and administrative action to enhance agency responses to such requests. The new Advisory Committee on Open Government should be required to conduct the study mandated by FASTER FOIA.
- **Direct fees to support OGIS and encourage agency compliance.** In addition to being a major sticking point for agencies and requesters, the collection of fees is not currently correlated with any efforts to process requests, or reduce the systemic backlogs that prevent the public from getting timely access to government records through the FOIA. The Senate version of the OPEN Government Act (S. 1090), included a provision that would have allowed an eligible agency that met the 20 day statutory deadline to keep half of the fees charged for processing the request. We recommend that the Committee include similar language, and that the proposal be expanded so that a percentage of the fees associated with any request that was not processed by the statutory deadline be directed to OGIS.

¹¹ At least one representative of the media, frequent public interest FOIA requester, frequent commercial FOIA requester, public interest representative with expertise in FOIA, public interest representative with expertise in information technology, and three public interest representatives with expertise in government openness and transparency.

Attachment B: Letter Endorsing HR 1211

Members of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 24, 2014

Dear Representative,

We, the undersigned organizations, are pleased to support H.R. 1211, the FOIA Oversight and Implementation Act of 2014, a bill to amend the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to promote greater government transparency and accountability. The bipartisan bill is cosponsored by House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), Ranking Member Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), and Representative Mike Quigley (D-Ill.). We urge you to vote in favor of this open government legislation.

The FOIA has yet to become an effective and efficient tool for the public to access government information, and the experience of the past few years makes clear the need for reform to ensure the law is implemented as Congress intended. Particular reforms included in H.R. 1211 that we support include advancing the online portal for FOIA requests, establishing an open government advisory committee, requiring all agencies to update their FOIA regulations, and providing the Office of Government Information Services with the ability to submit reports and testimony directly to Congress and the President. The bill also encourages more proactive disclosures, and puts into statute the current administrative policy of a “presumption of openness” with which agencies should review FOIA requests.

This bill has also been a catalyst for administrative reform. We welcome the Obama Administration’s commitments to similar significant reforms to FOIA in the U.S. National Action Plan for the Open Government Partnership. Similar to H.R. 1211, the President has pledged to create a central, online FOIA portal, establish an advisory committee for modernizing FOIA, and improve agency FOIA practices to reduce backlog. We also appreciate the President’s promise to harmonize the current confusing patchwork of FOIA regulations. While we are working to support the fulfillment of these commitments, we believe that these efforts will be strengthened when supported in statute. We will work with Congress and the Administration to ensure that any final FOIA reform legislation will do just that.

While the House bill reflects several of our recommendations to improve FOIA for the American people, there is still more that must be done. We look forward to working with the Senate Judiciary Committee to advance legislation with additional reforms, including provisions to curb the overuse and abuse of certain exemptions—particularly Exemption 3 and Exemption 5. At a minimum, the application of Exemption 5 should be narrowed to promote greater transparency and be subject to the same time limits as the President’s records, and a public interest balancing test should be used when applying Exemption 3. Additionally, we hope that the Senate Judiciary Committee will put in place a much stronger requirement that agencies make all records that have been reviewed for release available to the public.

We urge you to vote for H.R. 1211 and then join us in supporting House and Senate FOIA champions to produce a final bill with robust Freedom of Information Act reforms.

Sincerely,

American Association of Law Libraries

American Library Association

American Society of News Editors

Association of Alternative Newsmedia

Association of Research Libraries

Center for Effective Government

Center for Media and Democracy

Delaware Coalition for Open Government

Delaware League of Women Voters

Government Accountability Project – GAP

iSolon.org

James Madison Project

Liberty Coalition

Mine Safety and Health News

Security Counselors

OpenTheGovernment.org

Project On Government Oversight (POGO)

Public Citizen

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
(PEER)

Sage Information Services

Society of American Archivists

Society of Professional Journalists

Sunlight Foundation

Tully Center for Free Speech at Syracuse University

Vermont Press Association