



# Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act Advances Federal Open Data Goals

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Every year, Federal agencies prepare and submit thousands of in-depth reports to various congressional committees. These **congressionally mandated reports** are statutory requirements enacted by Congress that direct Federal agency officials to publish reports detailing certain plans, evaluations and studies, or actions taken or forthcoming. Mandated reports are used as a tool for congressional oversight and to inform decision-making.



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# What is the Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act?

The bipartisan Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act (“Congressionally Mandated Reports Act”, [H.R. 2485](#), [S. 2839](#)) requires the Director of the [Government Publishing Office \(GPO\)](#) to “establish and maintain an online portal accessible to the public that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of all congressionally mandated reports in one place.”

The Congressionally Mandated Reports Act would require all full reports published on the online portal to include and be searchable by agency, statute requiring the report, date of publication and submission, receiving congressional committee, keywords or tags, serial numbers, title or any other relevant information as determined by the Director. The Act applies to any reports to be submitted on or following the date the Act is passed; for any reports submitted prior to the date of passage, the Director has one year to ensure publication on the open portal.

Agencies must submit reports to the GPO within 30 to 45 days of submission to the designated congressional committee. Federally chartered corporations and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) are excluded from the requirements of this bill. The Act follows guidelines within the Freedom of Information Act regarding disclosure of confidential information (per Section 552, title 5, US Code). According to a June 2021 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimate](#), the implementation of the Act would cost \$400,000 per year.

# Why is the Congressionally Mandated Reports Act important and how will it improve Federal data practices?

[Thousands](#) of mandated reports are submitted annually. Ability to sort through all agency reports can allow the public as well as Congress to understand how agencies are achieving their policy goals. While many of these reports are disclosable under existing public records laws, the burden is on the public or stakeholders to request the report if an agency chooses not to make it available at the time of submission to Congress. This bill creates the default expectation that reports are open and available, increasing transparency and accountability, and therefore ensuring efficient use of taxpayer dollars, increasing technical capacity in government oversight, and ultimately improving public trust in government.

In addition to the Data Coalition’s endorsement, the Congressionally Mandated Reports Act is endorsed by [29 other organizations](#) as of April 2021.