



**For immediate release**

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Contact: Jessica Yabsley at [Jessica.yabsley@datacoalition.org](mailto:Jessica.yabsley@datacoalition.org) or 202-415-4025

**Press Release**

**Congress to Executive Branch: Don't just "go through the motions" on the DATA Act**

*Reps. Hurd, Meadows, Connolly, and Kelly Insist on Full Contractor Reporting Pilot Program, Vigorous Implementation*

**Washington, D.C.** -- Today the Data Coalition commended the House Oversight Committee's subcommittees on Information Technology and Government Operations on an effective oversight hearing on the implementation of the [DATA Act](#) of 2014, the nation's first open data law. Jointly chaired by IT subcommittee chairman Will Hurd (R-TX) and Government Operations subcommittee chairman Mark Meadows (R-NC), the hearing revealed that federal agencies are on track to transform their spending information from disconnected documents into standardized, open data by May 2017, as the DATA Act requires.

But Hurd, Meadows, and ranking members Robin Kelly (D-IL) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA) had to insist that the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) redesign a key pilot program and disavow a too-narrow interpretation of which data fields the law requires the executive branch to standardize.

"The DATA Act means better transparency for American taxpayers *outside* government, data-driven analytics to improve management *within* government, and automated compliance to reduce grantees' and contractors reporting costs *to* government," said Hudson Hollister, executive director of the Data Coalition. "These benefits can only be realized if the Treasury Department and the White House OMB implement the law faithfully - even on technical details like insisting on a consistent data structure. Today, Reps. Hurd, Meadows, Kelly, and Connolly showed they're willing to keep the Treasury Department and the White House honest by digging into those technical details themselves. We're grateful for their leadership."

In one key moment, OMB Controller Dave Mader told the committee that OMB would redesign the contractor reporting pilot program required by Section 5 of the DATA Act and within 45 days. The law requires OMB to adopt a standardized data format for all information reported by federal contractors and test whether software could automate those reports, reducing compliance costs.

A report by the Government Accountability Office released for the hearing revealed that OMB only intended to standardize one area of contractor reporting. Rep. Meadows insisted that OMB follow the law's requirements by broadening the pilot program and collecting a full year of standardized reports. Mader promised OMB would do so.

Rep. Meadows also took issue with OMB's interpretation of the DATA Act to require the government to standardize a narrower range of data elements. A January GAO report indicated that OMB only viewed 11 out of the 57 DATA Act elements as strictly required by the law. But under Meadows' questioning, Mader accepted a broader interpretation, recognizing all 57 data elements as legally mandatory.

Rep. Hurd asked Fiscal Assistant Secretary Dave Lebryk if all agencies would meet the law's requirement to standardize all spending information by May 2017. Lebryk told the committee, "The short answer is yes." But he added that some agencies may have a harder time than others delivering high-quality data and establishing a crucial linkage between accounting and award systems.

Rep. Hurd closed the hearing by recognizing that ultimately it is the responsibility of agencies to apply the standards and follow the reporting guidance issued by Treasury and OMB. Rep. Hurd asked OMB to provide a full list of agency officials responsible for DATA Act compliance. OMB committed to provide the list which Rep. Hurd hinted could be used to identify agencies to testify at a future oversight hearing assessing implementation progress which Rep. Connolly called for in September 2016.

To watch the full hearing, click [here](#).

### **About the Data Coalition**

The Data Coalition advocates on behalf of the private sector and the public interest for the publication of government information as standardized, open data. Open data enhances accountability, improves government management, reduces compliance costs, and stimulates innovation. Representing a cross-section of the technology industry and implementers, the Coalition's membership includes market leaders such as Workiva, RR Donnelley, Booz Allen Hamilton, and CGI Federal and growing start-ups such as idaciti and CBeyondData. For more information, visit [datacoalition.org](http://datacoalition.org).

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**Witnesses:**

**Ms. Michelle Sager**

Director, Strategic Issues

U.S. Government Accountability Office

Testimony -

<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2016-04-19-Sager-GAO-Testimony.pdf>

**The Honorable David Mader**

Controller

Office of Federal Financial Management

The Office of Management and Budget

Testimony -

<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2016-04-19-Mader-OMB-Testimony.pdf>

**Mr. David A. Lebryk**

Fiscal Assistant Secretary

U.S. Department of the Treasury

Testimony -

<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2016-04-19-Lebryk-Treasury-Testimony.pdf>

**Mr. Michael Peckham**

Executive Director, DATA Act Program Management Office

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Testimony -

<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2016-04-19-Lebryk-Treasury-Testimony.pdf>