



For immediate release

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****Press Release****

OPEN Government Data Act Set to Clear Senate

Bill will set a presumption that all public federal information should be expressed as open, structured, machine readable data.

Washington, D.C. – Today the [Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary \(OPEN\) Government Data Act \(S.760; H.R. 1770\)](#), as championed by Senators Ben Sasse (R-NE) and Brian Schatz (D-HI), was incorporated into a package of amendments ([S.Amdt.1003](#)) representing the final negotiated Senate FY18 [National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\) \(S. 1519; H.R. 2810\)](#). You can find the new bill text incorporated as Sec. 6012 on page 1013 of the Congressional Record [here](#).

The NDAA is expected to pass both chambers of Congress and be signed by the President, meaning that this open data bill is likely to become law.

This version of the OPEN Government Data Act closely mirrors the original bill (S. 760), but incorporates some changes based on input from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), ensuring support from the Administration going forward.

On Monday, July 24th, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee cleared S.760 for consideration by the full Senate (see [S. Rept. 115-134](#)) (the Committee-cleared version does not include the revised text from OMB as incorporated into the Senate NDAA package).

The OPEN Government Data Act will require a government-wide policy for all federal agencies to publish their information online, using non-proprietary, machine-readable data formats. Sasse and Schatz have been leading the campaign for its passage in the Senate; Representatives Blake Farenthold (R-TX) and Derek Kilmer (D-WA) have introduced it in the House.

The bill codifies the 2013 government-wide Open Data policy (“Open Data Policy-Managing Information as an Asset”, [M-13-13](#)), which has been integrated into agency policy for the past four years, into law.

“The OPEN Government Data Act is a comprehensive open data mandate that establishes open and machine-readable data as the benchmark for all federal agency information management,” said Hudson Hollister, Executive Director of the [Data Coalition](#). “This bill will push the whole federal government to modernize, across all its information operations, and it will reinforce the mandate of the [DATA Act of 2014](#) to transform spending information into open data. We applaud Senators Sasse and Schatz for their steadfast bipartisanship leadership.”

The Revised OPEN Government Data Act:

- Pushes federal agencies to publish all their data sets in a truly accessible manner, as machine-readable data, using open formats;
- Requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director to publish consolidated and comprehensive guidance to govern agency implementation of the bill’s requirements;
- Mandates that agency Chief Information Officers (CIOs) follow OMB guidance to make all public federal data sets available through a central Federal Data Catalog managed by the General Services Administration (GSA);
- Creates expectations for agency CIOs to improve the integrity, quality, and utility of their data assets;
- Challenges the government’s current use of proprietary data sets by requiring agencies to use open formats for any new open government data asset and to the extent practicable adopt open formats for all open data assets created before the passage of the Act;
- Empowers agency Chief Information Officers with oversight over data asset management, formatting, compilation of the agency Enterprise Data Inventory, reviewing best practices and public engagement, ensuring agency IT infrastructure can support open data, ensuring that agencies use their own data assets to improve operations, and using data to support government-wide administration, statistics, research and financial management initiatives; and
- Writes meaningful definitions for “data asset”, “metadata”, and “machine-readable” into US law to enable smarter legislation in the future.

In late June of this year, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scored S.760 and concluded that it would cost about \$2 million over the 2018-2021 period (see the CBO statement [here](#)).

For more background on the OPEN Government Data Act, you can view our Executive Director’s testimony at the March House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing titled, “[Legislative Proposals for Fostering Transparency](#).” The full hearing recap is [here](#).

Track the original bill (S.760) [here](#).

About the Data Coalition: The Data Coalition is the world's first, and only, open data trade association. We advocate 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. Our members represent a cross-section of the technology industry and implementers, employ over two hundred thousand Americans, and have a combined market capitalization exceeding \$1.5 trillion. For more information, visit datacoalition.org.

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