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Press Release

Senate Committee Approves OPEN Government Data Act

Washington, DC-- Today, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee unanimously approved S. 2852, the [Open, Public, Electronic and Necessary \(OPEN\) Government Data Act](#). The sweeping open data proposal will set a presumption that all public federal information should be expressed in searchable formats and freely available for everyone to use.

The [Data Coalition](#), the nation's only open data trade association, celebrated the committee's unanimous vote. "The OPEN Government Data Act will create new opportunities to bring transparency to the public *outside* government, enable data-driven decision-making *inside* government, and automate reporting *to* government," said Executive Director Hudson Hollister. "New technologies can deliver these benefits - but only when government information is made machine-readable and freely useable."

Section 5 of the OPEN Government Data Act, introduced last month by Sens. Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Ben Sasse (R-NE), [provides](#) that government data shall "be published as machine-readable data ... in an open format, and under open licenses."

"Too often, the government uses proprietary data formats to publish information, and requires users to purchase licenses," said Hollister. "For example, the use of the proprietary DUNS Number to identify federal grantees and contractors means that public spending information is [not open to taxpayers](#) to freely download and use. Under Section 5, the government will have to address monopolies like the DUNS Number and allow the public to freely use public information."

Section 5 will also address the SEC's [continued use of document-based corporate disclosures](#) instead of open data, the IRS' [reluctance to move to open data nonprofit tax returns](#), and many other areas where the transformation to open data lags behind available technology.

The Senate committee adopted an [Amendment](#) that made slight changes to the OPEN Government Data Act. The proposal can now be considered by the full Senate. Reps. Derek

Kilmer (D-WA) and Blake Farenthold (R-TX) introduced a nearly identical bill in the House of Representatives.

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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.