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U.S. GOVERNMENT
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112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4631

AN ACT

To amend title 5, United States Code, to institute spending limits and transparency requirements for Federal conference and travel expenditures, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Government Spending Accountability Act of 2012'' or the ''GSA Act of 2012''.

SEC. 2. LIMITS AND TRANSPARENCY FOR CONFERENCE AND TRAVEL SPENDING.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 5711 the following:

''§ 5712. Limits and transparency for conference and travel spending

''(a) CONFERENCE TRANSPARENCY AND SPENDING LIMITS.—

''(1) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF CONFERENCE MATERIALS.—Each agency shall post on the public website of that agency detailed information on any presentation made by any employee of that agency at a conference (except to the extent the head of an agency excludes such information for reasons of national security) including—

''(A) the prepared text of any verbal presentation made; and

''(B) any visual, digital, video, or audio materials presented, including photographs, slides, and audio-visual recordings.

''(2) LIMITS ON AMOUNT EXPENDED ON A CONFERENCE.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), an agency may not expend more than $500,000 to support a single conference.

"(B) EXCEPTION.—The head of an agency may waive the limitation in subparagraph (A) for a specific conference after making a determination that the expenditure is justified as the most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling purpose. The head of an agency shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on any waiver granted under this subparagraph, including the justification for such waiver.

"(C) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to preclude an agency from receiving financial support or other assistance from a private entity to pay or defray the costs of a conference the total cost of which exceeds $500,000.

"(b) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE RULE.—An agency may not pay the travel expenses for more than 50 employees of that agency who are stationed in the United States, for any international conference, unless the Sec-

retary of State determines that attendance for such employees is in the national interest.

''(c) REPORT ON TRAVEL EXPENSES REQUIRED.—At the beginning of each quarter of each fiscal year, each agency shall post on the public website of that agency a report on each conference for which the agency paid travel expenses during the preceding 3 months that includes—

''(1) the itemized expenses paid by the agency, including travel expenses, and any agency expenditures to otherwise support the conference;

''(2) the primary sponsor of the conference;

''(3) the location of the conference;

''(4) the date of the conference;

''(5) a brief explanation of how the participation of employees from such agency at the conference advanced the mission of the agency;

''(6) the title of any employee, or any individual who is not a Federal employee, whose travel expenses or other conference expenses were paid by the agency;

''(7) the total number of individuals whose travel expenses or other conference expenses were paid by the agency; and

''(8) in the case of a conference for which that agency was the primary sponsor, a statement that—

''(A) describes the cost to the agency of selecting the specific conference venue;

''(B) describes why the location was selected, including a justification for such selection;

''(C) demonstrates the cost efficiency of the location;

''(D) provides a cost benefit analysis of holding a conference rather than conducting a teleconference; and

''(E) describes any financial support or other assistance from a private entity used to pay or defray the costs of the conference, and for each case where such support or assistance was used, the head of the agency shall include a certification that there is no conflict of interest resulting from such support or assistance.

''(d) FORMAT AND PUBLICATION OF REPORT.—Each report posted on the public website under subsection (c) shall—

''(1) be in a searchable electronic format; and

''(2) remain on that website for at least 5 years after the date of posting.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) AGENCY.—The term 'agency' has the meaning given that term under section 5701, but does not include the government of the District of Columbia.

''(2) CONFERENCE.—The term 'conference' means a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event to which an employee travels 25 miles or more to attend, that—

''(A) is held for consultation, education, discussion, or training; and

''(B) is not held entirely at a Government facility.

''(3) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.—The term 'international conference' means a conference occurring outside the United States attended by representatives of—

''(A) the Government of the United States; and

''(B) any foreign government, international organization, or foreign nongovernmental organization.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5711 the following:

''5712. Limits and transparency for conference and travel spending.''.

(c) ANNUAL TRAVEL EXPENSE LIMITS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of each of fiscal years 2013 through 2017, an agency (as defined under section 5712(e) of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)) may not make, or obligate to make, expenditures for travel expenses, in an aggregate amount greater than 70 percent of the aggregate amount of such expenses for fiscal year 2010.

(2) IDENTIFICATION OF TRAVEL EXPENSES.—

(A) RESPONSIBILITIES.—Not later than December 31, 2012, and after consultation with the Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall establish guidelines for the determination of what expenses constitute travel expenses for purposes of this subsection. The guidelines shall identify specific expenses, and classes of expenses, that are to be treated as travel expenses.

(B) EXEMPTION FOR MILITARY TRAVEL.—The guidelines required under subparagraph (A) shall exclude military travel expenses in determining what expenses constitute travel ex-

penses. Military travel expenses shall include travel expenses involving military combat, the training or deployment of uniformed military personnel, and such other travel expenses as determined by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

Passed the House of Representatives September 11, 2012.

Attest:

Clerk.

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