

Union Calendar No. 479

112TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4631

[Report No. 112-664]

To require quarterly reports on agency conferences and meetings, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 25, 2012

Mr. WALSH of Illinois (for himself, Mr. LONG, Mr. MICHAUD, and Mr. PAUL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

Additional sponsors: Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. LANDRY, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, and Mr. KELLY

SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

A BILL

To require quarterly reports on agency conferences and meetings, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Government Spending
5 Accountability Act of 2012” or the “GSA Act of 2012”.

6 **SEC. 2. AGENCY REPORTS ON CONFERENCES AND MEET-**
7 **INGS.**

8 (a) **QUARTERLY REPORTS REQUIRED.**—Not less fre-
9 quently than quarterly, the head of each agency shall sub-
10 mit a detailed, itemized report to the relevant committee
11 of Congress on any conference or meeting that occurs at
12 a location for which the agency must pay a fee or at a
13 location not owned, leased, or otherwise controlled by the
14 Federal Government and—

15 (1) that is attended by 50 or more employees;

16 or

17 (2) for which the total cost is \$100,000 or
18 more.

19 (b) **EXCLUSIONS.**—Subsection (a) shall not apply
20 with respect to any conference or meeting that the head
21 of an agency determines—

22 (1) that reporting on such conference or meet-
23 ing would not be in the interest of national security;

24 or

1 (2) is necessary because of an imminent threat
2 to health or safety or other emergency.

3 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the
5 meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5,
6 United States Code.

7 (2) EMPLOYEE.—The term “employee” has the
8 meaning given that term in section 2105 of title 5,
9 United States Code.

10 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

11 *This Act may be cited as the “Government Spending*
12 *Accountability Act of 2012” or the “GSA Act of 2012”.*

13 **SEC. 2. LIMITS AND TRANSPARENCY FOR TRAVEL AND CON-**
14 **FERENCE SPENDING.**

15 (a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 57 of title 5, United States
16 Code, is amended by inserting after section 5711 the fol-
17 lowing:

18 **“§5712. Limits and transparency for travel and con-**
19 **ference spending**

20 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 “(1) CONFERENCE.—The term ‘conference’ means
22 a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event to
23 which an employee travels 25 miles or more to attend,
24 that—

1 “(A) is held for consultation, education, dis-
2 cussion, or training; and

3 “(B) is not held entirely at a Government
4 facility.

5 “(2) *INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE*.—The term
6 ‘international conference’ means a conference occur-
7 ring outside the United States attended by representa-
8 tives of—

9 “(A) the Government of the United States;
10 and

11 “(B) any foreign government, international
12 organization, or foreign nongovernmental orga-
13 nization.

14 “(b) *INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE RULE*.—An agency
15 may not pay the travel expenses for more than 50 employees
16 of that agency who are stationed in the United States, for
17 any international conference, unless the Secretary of State
18 determines that attendance for such employees is in the na-
19 tional interest.

20 “(c) *REPORT ON TRAVEL EXPENSES REQUIRED*.—At
21 the beginning of each quarter of each fiscal year, each agen-
22 cy shall post on the public website of that agency a report
23 on each conference for which the agency paid travel expenses
24 during the preceding 3 months that includes—

1 “(1) the itemized expenses paid by the agency,
2 including travel expenses, and any agency expendi-
3 tures to otherwise support the conference;

4 “(2) the primary sponsor of the conference;

5 “(3) the location of the conference;

6 “(4) in the case of a conference for which that
7 agency was the primary sponsor, a statement that—

8 “(A) describes the cost to the agency of se-
9 lecting the specific conference venue;

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

12 “(C) demonstrates the cost efficiency of the
13 location;

14 “(D) provides a cost benefit analysis of
15 holding a conference rather than conducting a
16 teleconference; and

17 “(E) describes any financial support or
18 other assistance from a private entity used to
19 pay or defray the costs of the conference, and for
20 each case where such support or assistance was
21 used, the head of the agency shall include a cer-
22 tification that there is no conflict of interest re-
23 sulting from such support or assistance;

24 “(5) the date of the conference;

1 “(6) a brief explanation of how the participation
2 of employees from such agency at the conference ad-
3 vanced the mission of the agency;

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

8 “(8) the total number of individuals whose travel
9 expenses or other conference expenses were paid by the
10 agency.

11 “(d) *FORMAT AND PUBLICATION OF REPORT.*—Each
12 report posted on the public website under subsection (c)
13 shall—

14 “(1) be in a searchable electronic format; and

15 “(2) remain on that website for at least 5 years
16 after the date of posting.”.

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

“5712. *Limits and transparency for travel and conference spending.*”.

21 “(c) *ANNUAL TRAVEL EXPENSE LIMITS.*—

22 “(1) *IN GENERAL.*—In the case of each of fiscal
23 years 2013 through 2017, an agency (as defined
24 under section 5701 of title 5, United States Code)
25 may not make, or obligate to make, expenditures for

1 *travel expenses, in an aggregate amount greater than*
2 *70 percent of the aggregate amount of such expenses*
3 *for fiscal year 2010.*

4 (2) *IDENTIFICATION OF TRAVEL EXPENSES.—*

5 (A) *RESPONSIBILITIES.—Not later than De-*
6 *cember 31, 2012, and after consultation with the*
7 *Administrator of General Services and the Direc-*
8 *tor of the Administrative Office of the United*
9 *States Courts, the Director of the Office of Man-*
10 *agement and Budget shall establish guidelines for*
11 *the determination of what expenses constitute*
12 *travel expenses for purposes of this subsection.*
13 *The guidelines shall identify specific expenses,*
14 *and classes of expenses, that are to be treated as*
15 *travel expenses.*

16 (B) *EXEMPTION FOR MILITARY TRAVEL.—*

17 *The guidelines required under subparagraph (A)*
18 *shall exclude military travel expenses in deter-*
19 *mining what expenses constitute travel expenses.*
20 *Military travel expenses shall include travel ex-*
21 *periences involving military combat, the training*
22 *or deployment of uniformed military personnel,*
23 *and such other travel expenses as determined by*
24 *the Director of the Office of Management and*
25 *Budget, in consultation with the Administrator*

1 *of General Services and the Director of the Ad-*
2 *ministrative Office of the United States Courts.*

3 *(d) CONFERENCE TRANSPARENCY AND SPENDING LIM-*
4 *ITS.—*

5 *(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:*

6 *(A) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the*
7 *meaning given that term under section 5701 of*
8 *title 5, United States Code.*

9 *(B) CONFERENCE.—The term “conference”*
10 *has the meaning given that term under section*
11 *5712(a) of that title 5, United States Code (as*
12 *added by subsection (a)).*

13 *(2) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF CONFERENCE MA-*
14 *TERIALS.—Each agency shall post on the public*
15 *website of that agency detailed information on any*
16 *presentation made by any employee of that agency at*
17 *a conference (except to the extent the head of an agen-*
18 *cy excludes such information for reasons of national*
19 *security) including—*

20 *(A) the prepared text of any verbal presen-*
21 *tation made; and*

22 *(B) any visual, digital, video, or audio ma-*
23 *terials presented, including photographs, slides,*
24 *and audio-visual recordings.*

1 (3) *LIMITS ON AMOUNT EXPENDED ON A CON-*
2 *ERENCE.—*

3 (A) *IN GENERAL.—An agency may not ex-*
4 *pend more than \$500,000 to support a single*
5 *conference.*

6 (B) *RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in*
7 *this paragraph shall be construed to preclude an*
8 *agency from receiving financial support or other*
9 *assistance from a private entity to pay or defray*
10 *the costs of a conference the total cost of which*
11 *exceeds \$500,000.*

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