

113TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 313

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

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 18, 2013

Mrs. EMERSON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

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## A BILL

To amend title 5, United States Code, to institute spending limits and transparency requirements for Federal conference and travel expenditures, 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 2013” or the “GSA Act of 2013”.

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

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

6 **“§ 5712. Limits and transparency for conference and**  
7 **travel spending**

8 “(a) CONFERENCE TRANSPARENCY AND SPENDING  
9 LIMITS.—

10 “(1) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF CONFERENCE  
11 MATERIALS.—Each agency shall post on the public  
12 website of that agency detailed information on any  
13 presentation made by any employee of that agency  
14 at a conference (except to the extent the head of an  
15 agency excludes such information for reasons of na-  
16 tional security) including—

17 “(A) the prepared text of any verbal pres-  
18 entation made; and

19 “(B) any visual, digital, video, or audio  
20 materials presented, including photographs,  
21 slides, and audio-visual recordings.

22 “(2) LIMITS ON AMOUNT EXPENDED ON A CON-  
23 FERENCE.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in  
25 subparagraph (B), an agency may not expend

1 more than \$500,000 to support a single con-  
2 ference.

3 “(B) EXCEPTION.—The head of an agency  
4 may waive the limitation in subparagraph (A)  
5 for a specific conference after making a deter-  
6 mination that the expenditure is justified as the  
7 most cost-effective option to achieve a compel-  
8 ling purpose. The head of an agency shall sub-  
9 mit to the appropriate congressional committees  
10 a report on any waiver granted under this sub-  
11 paragraph, including the justification for such  
12 waiver.

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

19 “(b) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE RULE.—An  
20 agency may not pay the travel expenses for more than 50  
21 employees of that agency who are stationed in the United  
22 States, for any international conference, unless the Sec-  
23 retary of State determines that attendance for such em-  
24 ployees is in the national interest.

1       “(c) REPORT ON TRAVEL EXPENSES REQUIRED.—

2 At the beginning of each quarter of each fiscal year, each  
3 agency shall post on the public website of that agency a  
4 report on each conference for which the agency paid travel  
5 expenses during the preceding 3 months that includes—

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

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

10          “(3) the location of the conference;

11          “(4) the date of the conference;

12          “(5) a brief explanation of how the participa-  
13 tion of employees from such agency at the con-  
14 ference advanced the mission of the agency;

15          “(6) the title of any employee, or any individual  
16 who is not a Federal employee, whose travel ex-  
17 penses or other conference expenses were paid by the  
18 agency;

19          “(7) the total number of individuals whose trav-  
20 el expenses or other conference expenses were paid  
21 by the agency; and

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

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

1           “(B) describes why the location was se-  
2           lected, including a justification for such selec-  
3           tion;

4           “(C) demonstrates the cost efficiency of  
5           the location;

6           “(D) provides a cost benefit analysis of  
7           holding a conference rather than conducting a  
8           teleconference; and

9           “(E) describes any financial support or  
10          other assistance from a private entity used to  
11          pay or defray the costs of the conference, and  
12          for each case where such support or assistance  
13          was used, the head of the agency shall include  
14          a certification that there is no conflict of inter-  
15          est resulting from such support or assistance.

16          “(d) **FORMAT AND PUBLICATION OF REPORT.**—Each  
17          report posted on the public website under subsection (c)  
18          shall—

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

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

22          “(e) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

23                 “(1) **AGENCY.**—The term ‘agency’ has the  
24          meaning given that term under section 5701, but

1 does not include the government of the District of  
2 Columbia.

3 “(2) CONFERENCE.—The term ‘conference’  
4 means a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or  
5 event to which an employee travels 25 miles or more  
6 to attend, that—

7 “(A) is held for consultation, education,  
8 discussion, or training; and

9 “(B) is not held entirely at a Government  
10 facility.

11 “(3) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.—The term  
12 ‘international conference’ means a conference occur-  
13 ring outside the United States attended by rep-  
14 resentatives of—

15 “(A) the Government of the United States;  
16 and

17 “(B) any foreign government, international  
18 organization, or foreign nongovernmental orga-  
19 nization.”.

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

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

24 (c) ANNUAL TRAVEL EXPENSE LIMITS.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of each of fiscal  
2 years 2014 through 2018, an agency (as defined  
3 under section 5712(e) of title 5, United States Code,  
4 as added by subsection (a)) may not make, or obli-  
5 gate to make, expenditures for travel expenses, in an  
6 aggregate amount greater than 70 percent of the ag-  
7 gregate amount of such expenses for fiscal year  
8 2010.

9           (2) IDENTIFICATION OF TRAVEL EXPENSES.—

10           (A) RESPONSIBILITIES.—Not later than  
11 September 30, 2013, and after consultation  
12 with the Administrator of General Services and  
13 the Director of the Administrative Office of the  
14 United States Courts, the Director of the Office  
15 of Management and Budget shall establish  
16 guidelines for the determination of what ex-  
17 penses constitute travel expenses for purposes  
18 of this subsection. The guidelines shall identify  
19 specific expenses, and classes of expenses, that  
20 are to be treated as travel expenses.

21           (B) EXEMPTION FOR MILITARY TRAVEL.—

22 The guidelines required under subparagraph  
23 (A) shall exclude military travel expenses in de-  
24 termining what expenses constitute travel ex-  
25 penses. Military travel expenses shall include

1 travel expenses involving military combat, the  
2 training or deployment of uniformed military  
3 personnel, and such other travel expenses as de-  
4 termined by the Director of the Office of Man-  
5 agement and Budget, in consultation with the  
6 Administrator of General Services and the Di-  
7 rector of the Administrative Office of the  
8 United States Courts.

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