

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 727

Directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to provide members of the public with Internet access to certain Congressional Research Service publications, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 10, 2012

Mr. LANCE (for himself, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. SCHIFF) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

RESOLUTION

Directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to provide members of the public with Internet access to certain Congressional Research Service publications, and for other purposes.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.**

3 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
4 “Public Access to Congressional Research Service Reports
5 Resolution of 2012” or the “Congressional Research Serv-
6 ice Electronic Accessibility Resolution of 2012”.

7 (b) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The Congressional Research Service, a spe-
2 cial reference unit within the Library of Congress,
3 offers invaluable research and analysis to Members
4 of Congress on all current and emerging issues of
5 national policy.

6 (2) The Congressional Research Service staff of
7 approximately 700 employees, including lawyers,
8 economists, reference librarians, and social, natural,
9 and physical scientists, are governed by require-
10 ments for accuracy, objectivity, balance, and non-
11 partisanship.

12 (3) The Congressional Research Service has a
13 responsibility to ensure that Members of Congress
14 have available the best possible information and
15 analysis on which to base the policy decisions the
16 American people have elected them to make.

17 (4) It is often burdensome, difficult, and time-
18 consuming for citizens to obtain access to objective
19 and nonpartisan policy analysis on issues affecting
20 their interests.

21 (5) It will enhance our democracy to provide
22 citizens with access to unbiased and accurate CRS
23 documents on legislation and other critical issues be-
24 fore Congress.

1 (6) Allowing public access to CRS will empower
2 citizens and enable Members of Congress to become
3 even more effective “representatives” of the public’s
4 concerns and goals.

5 **SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN CONGRESSIONAL RE-**
6 **SEARCH SERVICE INFORMATION.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF DATA-
8 BASE OF INFORMATION.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Clerk of the House of
10 Representatives, in consultation with the Director of
11 the Congressional Research Service, shall establish
12 and maintain a centralized, searchable, bulk down-
13 loadable, electronic database consisting of—

14 (A) all of the information described in
15 paragraph (2) that is available to Members, of-
16 ficers, employees, and offices of the House of
17 Representatives through the Congressional Re-
18 search Service Web site; and

19 (B) in accordance with subsection (b), an
20 index of the information described in subpara-
21 graph (A).

22 (2) INFORMATION DESCRIBED.—The informa-
23 tion described in this paragraph is as follows:

24 (A) Congressional Research Service Issue
25 Briefs.

1 (B) Congressional Research Service Re-
2 ports.

3 (C) Congressional Research Service Au-
4 thorization of Appropriations Products and Ap-
5 propriations Products.

6 (D) Materials intended or available for
7 general congressional distribution that are the
8 same or substantially similar in content to CRS
9 Reports, Issue Briefs, and Appropriations Prod-
10 ucts.

11 (3) SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR MATERIALS IN-
12 CLUDED.—With respect to each issue brief, product,
13 or report included in the database under this sub-
14 section, the Clerk shall include—

15 (A) the name and identification number;

16 (B) the dates of initial release and updates
17 (if any); and

18 (C) the Congressional Research Service di-
19 vision or divisions that were responsible for its
20 production.

21 (4) UPDATES.—The Clerk, in consultation with
22 the Director, shall ensure that the information in
23 the database under this subsection is updated auto-
24 matically and electronically to reflect the availability

1 of new information and updates to existing informa-
2 tion described in paragraph (2).

3 (5) INITIAL INFORMATION.—The initial estab-
4 lishment of the database under this subsection shall
5 include all of the contents described in paragraph
6 (1) as of the date on which this resolution is agreed
7 to.

8 (b) INDEX OF DATABASE INFORMATION.—In addi-
9 tion to the database under subsection (a), the Clerk, in
10 consultation with the Director, shall establish and main-
11 tain contemporaneously a Web site containing a search-
12 able, sortable index of all of the information in the data-
13 base in both human-readable and machine-readable for-
14 mats (such as XML) that includes for each issue brief,
15 product, or report in the database—

16 (1) the name and identification number;
17 (2) the dates of initial release and updates (if
18 any); and

19 (3) the Congressional Research Service division
20 or divisions that were responsible for its production.

21 (c) LIMITATIONS.—

22 (1) CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.—Subsections
23 (a) and (b) do not apply to—

24 (A) any information that is confidential, as
25 determined by—

1 (i) the Director, or
2 (ii) the head of a Federal department
3 or agency that provided the information to
4 the Congressional Research Service; or
5 (B) any document that—

6 (i) is the product of a confidential re-
7 search request made by a Member, officer,
8 employee, or office of the House of Rep-
9 resentatives;

10 (ii) has not been distributed to any in-
11 dividual or office other than the individual
12 or office making the request; and

13 (iii) is not intended for distribution to
14 any person other than the individual or of-
15 fice making the request

16 (2) REDACTION AND REVISION.—In carrying
17 out this section, the Clerk, on the basis of informa-
18 tion provided by the Director, may—

19 (A) remove from the information included
20 in the database (including from the issue brief,
21 product, or report itself) the name and contact
22 information regarding an employee of the Con-
23 gressional Research Service;

24 (B) remove from the information included
25 in the database (including from the issue brief,

1 product, or report itself) any material for which
2 the Director determines that including the in-
3 formation on the database may infringe the
4 copyright of a work protected under title 17,
5 United States Code; and

6 (C) make any changes in the information
7 included in the database (including from the
8 issue brief, product, or report itself) that the
9 Director determines necessary to ensure that
10 the information is accurate and current, except
11 that if the Clerk makes any such change with
12 respect to any material in the database, the
13 Clerk shall indicate in the database (with such
14 notation as the Clerk considers appropriate)
15 that more current information is available with
16 respect to the material than the information
17 provided in the database.

18 (3) METHOD OF REDACTION.—The Clerk shall
19 carry out any redaction under paragraph (2)(C) in
20 a manner which removes the least amount of mate-
21 rial necessary to carry out the purposes of the redac-
22 tion.

23 (4) ASSISTANCE FROM DIRECTOR FOR AUTO-
24 MATIC REDACTION.—The Clerk shall consult with
25 the Director to ensure the availability and implemen-

1 tation of such technology as may be necessary to fa-
2 cilitate the automatic redaction of information under
3 this subsection.

4 (d) FURNISHING OF NECESSARY INFORMATION.—
5 The Clerk shall consult with the Director to ensure that
6 the Clerk is provided with all of the information necessary
7 to carry out this section in such format as the Clerk con-
8 siders appropriate.

9 **SEC. 3. OTHER METHODS OF PUBLIC ACCESS.**

10 (a) ACCESS THROUGH WEB SITES OF MEMBERS AND
11 COMMITTEES.—Each official public Web site of a Member
12 of the House of Representatives, a committee of the House
13 of Representatives, or a joint committee of the Congress
14 shall permit members of the public to use the Web site
15 to obtain the information contained in the database estab-
16 lished under section 2, in the same manner and to the
17 same extent as Members, officers, employees, and offices
18 of the House of Representatives may obtain such informa-
19 tion through the Congressional Research Service Web site.

20 (b) REGULATIONS.—Subsection (a) shall be carried
21 out in accordance with regulations promulgated by the
22 Committee on House Administration of the House of Rep-
23 resentatives.

24 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

25 In this Act—

1 (1) the term “Clerk” means the Clerk of the
2 House of Representatives;

3 (2) the term “Director” means the Director of
4 the Congressional Research Service; and

5 (3) the term “Member of the House of Rep-
6 resentatives” includes a Delegate or Resident Com-
7 missioner to the Congress.

8 **SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

9 This resolution shall take effect upon the expiration
10 of the 6-month period which begins on the date on which
11 the resolution is agreed to, without regard to whether the
12 regulations described in section 3(b) or any other regula-
13 tions have been promulgated prior to the expiration of
14 such period.

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