

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5143

To require all bills, resolutions, and other documents of Congress to be created, transmitted, and published in searchable electronic formats, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2018

Mr. AMASH (for himself, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. McCLINTOCK, Mr. McKINLEY, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. JONES, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. MESSER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. BRAT, Mr. TONKO, Mr. NORMAN, and Mr. KHANNA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require all bills, resolutions, and other documents of Congress to be created, transmitted, and published in searchable electronic formats, 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; PURPOSES.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Searchable Legislation Act of 2018”.

1 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are as fol-
2 lows:

3 (1) To establish nonproprietary, machine-read-
4 able data standards for the creation, transmission,
5 and publication of Congressional information.

6 (2) To encourage the uniform use of nonpropri-
7 etary, machine-readable data standards, including
8 searchable electronic formats, for Congressional in-
9 formation by Congress and its support agencies and
10 offices.

11 (3) To ensure that Congressional information,
12 especially bills, resolutions, orders, and votes, can be
13 freely downloaded in bulk and electronically
14 searched.

15 **SEC. 2. REQUIRING SEARCHABLE ELECTRONIC FORMATS**
16 **FOR CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENTS.**

17 (a) SEARCHABLE ELECTRONIC FORMATS.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 2 of title 1, United
19 States Code, is amended by inserting after section
20 107 the following new section:

21 **“§ 107a. Searchable electronic formats**

22 “To the greatest extent practicable, Congress shall
23 ensure that all bills, resolutions, orders, and other docu-
24 ments of Congress, and all records of votes cast in Con-
25 gress and committees of Congress, are created, trans-

mitted, and published in searchable electronic formats,
consistent with data standards recommended by such advisory
bodies as Congress may establish.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 2 of title 1, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 107 the following new item:

“107a. Searchable electronic formats.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to the One Hundred Sixteenth Congress and each succeeding Congress.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL DATA TASK FORCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate, acting jointly, shall establish an advisory body to be known as the “Congressional Data Task Force” (hereafter referred to as the “Task Force”).

(b) DUTIES.—

(1) RECOMMENDATION OF DATA STANDARDS.—The Task Force shall recommend data standards for the creation, transmission, and publication of information and documents of Congress, including bills, resolutions, amendments, reports, laws, and records, in searchable electronic formats for purposes of sec-

1 tion 107a of title 1, United States Code (as added
2 by section 2(a)).

3 (2) SPECIFICATIONS FOR STANDARDS.—All
4 data standards recommended by the Task Force
5 shall be nonproprietary and machine-readable, and,
6 to the greatest extent possible, shall enable the bulk
7 downloading of information.

8 (3) CONSULTATION WITH EXPERTS.—In car-
9 rying out its duties, the Task Force shall consult
10 with private entities with expertise in data trans-
11 parency standards.

12 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall be
14 composed of employee representatives of the Office
15 of the Clerk of the House, the Office of the Sec-
16 retary of the Senate, the Library of Congress, the
17 Congressional Research Service, the Government
18 Publishing Office, the Center for Legislative Ar-
19 chives, and such other offices of Congress and the
20 legislative branch as the Clerk and Secretary con-
21 sider appropriate.

22 (2) NO ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR SERV-
23 ICE.—Members of the Task Force may not receive
24 additional pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of
25 their service on the Task Force.

1 (d) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—No additional funds
2 may be appropriated to carry out this section during a
3 fiscal year.

4 (e) TERMINATION.—The Task Force shall terminate
5 on the last day of the One Hundred Seventeenth Congress.

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