

The Honorable John McCain
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

April 2, 2018

Dear Senator McCain,

Thank you for your leadership and indefatigable efforts to provide public access to Congressional Research Service reports. It has been a long and difficult road. You introduced the first bill to release the reports to the public on January 28, 1998. As proof you do not age, we have attached a photograph of you, Sen. Leahy, and POGO executive director Danielle Brian from around that time.

Nevertheless, somehow 20 years has elapsed. In that time we saw the widespread adoption of mobile phones and smart phones, high speed internet connections, the emergence of social media, and no less than the digital transformation of our economy. But somehow CRS reports stubbornly remained the domain of the well-connected and the well-heeled and not the general public. But all that changed in the Omnibus Spending bill.

Within 90 days—180 at the most—the Library of Congress must publish new and updated CRS reports on its website, following the path laid out by your bipartisan, bicameral legislation. This is no less than a transformation of how the public can learn about the important issues before Congress from a non-partisan, expert source.

We're not counting the proverbial chickens before they've hatched. We will be watching so see whether the Library meets its deadline and whether the website lives up to its requirements. But we are comforted knowing that you will be watching, too. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

With gratitude and appreciation,

American Association of Law Libraries
American Commitment
American Library Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Association of Research Libraries
Center for Media and Democracy
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington
Coalition to Reduce Spending
Common Cause
Data Coalition
Defending Rights & Dissent

Issue One
Liberty Coalition
National Coalition for History
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Security Archive
National Security Counselors
Niskanen Center
Northern California Association of Law Libraries
Open the Government
Participatory Politics Foundation
Project On Government Oversight

Demand Progress Action
Electronic Privacy Information Center
Free Government Information
Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
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Society of American Archivists
Sunlight Foundation
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and Trade Division
Betsy Palmer, Lecturer, University of Arizona and
CRS alum
Morton Rosenberg, CRS alum
Marc Rotenberg
Richard Rowberg
Daniel Schuman
Christine Scott

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC

April 2, 2018

Dear Senator Leahy,

Thank you for your leadership and indefatigable efforts to provide public access to Congressional Research Service reports. It has been a long and difficult road. You introduced the first bill to release the reports to the public on January 28, 1998. As proof you do not age, we have attached a photograph of you, Sen. McCain, and POGO executive director Danielle Brian from around that time.

Nevertheless, somehow 20 years has elapsed. In that time we saw the widespread adoption of mobile phones and smart phones, high speed internet connections, the emergence of social media, and no less than the digital transformation of our economy. But somehow CRS reports stubbornly remained the domain of the well-connected and the well-heeled and not the general public. But you changed all that in the Omnibus Spending bill.

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The Honorable Kevin Yoder
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC

April 2, 2018

Dear Representative Yoder,

Thank you for your leadership and indefatigable efforts to provide public access to Congressional Research Service reports. Public access is now the law of the land—and it happened because of you.

You opened up the House Legislative Branch Appropriations subcommittee to hear from public witnesses, a practice that had been discontinued for several years. You met with representatives from civil society who advocated for public access to CRS reports, and once you gathered the facts, you took action, and did so on a bipartisan basis.

You included language to make CRS reports publicly available in your chairman's mark, which was favorably adopted by the subcommittee. And when that provision was challenged in the full committee, you successfully fought for its inclusion, and did so on a bipartisan basis. You stood on the side of the public. That appropriations bill was adopted by the House, establishing the House's position in favor of public access.

But even that wasn't enough. The Congress ultimately used the mechanism of an Omnibus Appropriations bill to fund the government, and you fought for inclusion of public access to CRS reports language in that bill. And you succeeded.

Within 90 days—180 at the most—the Library of Congress must publish new and updated CRS reports on its website, following the direction set forth by your committee. This is no less than a transformation of how the public can learn about the important issues before Congress from a non-partisan, expert source. No longer will CRS reports remain the domain of the well-connected and the well-heeled. You made this happen. We cannot thank you enough.

We're not counting the proverbial chickens before they've hatched. We will be watching so see whether the Library meets its deadline and whether the website lives up to its requirements. But we are comforted knowing that you will be watching, too. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

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Morton Rosenberg, CRS alum
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Christine Scott

The Honorable Tim Ryan
1126 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC

April 2, 2018

Dear Representative Ryan,

Thank you for your leadership in providing public access to Congressional Research Service reports. Public access is now the law of the law—and it happened because of you.

Along with Chairman Yoder, you opened up the House Legislative Branch Appropriations subcommittee to hear from public witnesses, a practice that had been discontinued for several years. You met with representatives from civil society who advocated for public access to CRS reports, and once you gathered the facts, you took action, and did so on a bipartisan basis.

You supported including language to make CRS reports publicly available in the chairman's mark, which was adopted by the subcommittee. And when when that provision was challenged in the full committee, you successfully fought for its inclusion, and did so on a bipartisan basis. This could not have been easy to do. You stood on the side of the public. That appropriations bill was adopted by the House, establishing the House's position in favor of public access.

But even that wasn't enough. The Congress ultimately used the mechanism of an Omnibus Appropriations bill to fund the government, and you fought for inclusion of public access to CRS reports language in that bill. And you succeeded.

Within 90 days—180 at the most—the Library of Congress must publish new and updated CRS reports on its website, following the direction set forth by the appropriations subcommittee. This is no less than a transformation of how the public can learn about the important issues before Congress from a non-partisan, expert source. No longer will CRS reports remain the domain of the well-connected and the well-heeled. You helped make this happen. We cannot thank you enough.

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Christine Scott

The Honorable Mike Quigley
2458 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC

April 2, 2018

Dear Representative Quigley,

Thank you for your leadership and indefatigable efforts to provide public access to Congressional Research Service reports. When you joined Congress, you spoke to the importance of government transparency and accountability, and put your legislative muscle behind your words. You introduced legislation to make CRS reports available to the public 352 days after you were first elected.

You persisted in advocating for public access, introducing legislation in the 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th and 115th Congresses. But you did more than just introduce legislation— you fought for it, hard. A turning point in the 20-year long fight was when you offered an amendment during the 114th Congress in the Appropriations Committee and demanded a vote. This was the first time the legislation received a vote in any committee. It was a gutsy move. It surfaced allies, put opponents on the record, and set the stage for the House to approve legislation in favor of public access the following Congress.

Within 90 days—180 at the most—the Library of Congress must publish new and updated CRS reports on its website, following the path laid out by your bipartisan, bicameral legislation. This is no less than a transformation of how the public can learn about the important issues before Congress from a non-partisan, expert source. No longer will CRS reports remain the domain of the well-connected and the well-heeled. You made this happen. We cannot thank you enough.

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Marc Rotenberg
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Daniel Schuman
Christine Scott

The Honorable Leonard Lance
426 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC

April 2, 2018

Dear Representative Lance,

Thank you for your leadership and indefatigable efforts to provide public access to Congressional Research Service reports. You first introduced legislation to make CRS reports available to the public only 338 days after you were elected, and did so on a bipartisan basis.

You persisted in advocating for public access, introducing legislation in the 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th and 115th Congresses. But you did more than just introduce legislation— you fought for it. You continued to work on a bipartisan basis to amass supporters, advance public interest arguments, and keep the legislation in the limelight. With the passage of the Omnibus Appropriations Act, public access to the reports is now the law of the land.

Within 90 days—180 at the most—the Library of Congress must publish new and updated CRS reports on its website, following the path laid out by your bipartisan, bicameral legislation. This is no less than a transformation of how the public can learn about the important issues before Congress from a non-partisan, expert source. No longer will CRS reports remain the domain of the well-connected and the well-heeled. We cannot thank you enough.

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