

# **Transparency in Government Act**

**Rep. Mike Quigley**

## **Section-by-Section**

### **Title I – Improving Access to Information About Members of Congress**

#### **Sec. 101. Greater Disclosure and Electronic Filing of Personal Financial Information.**

Requires Members, officers and specified government employees to provide more detailed information on their financial disclosure reports, and requires these reports to be filed electronically and posted for public review within 48 hours.

Requires financial disclosure reports of Members, officers and specified government employees to use a rounding system when reporting assets, unearned income, and liabilities over \$25,000. When reporting amounts greater than \$25,000, filers must round to the nearest ten thousand for amounts up to \$100,000, round to the nearest hundred thousand between \$100,000 and \$1 million, and round to the nearest million for all amounts totaling \$1 million or more.

Requires more frequent disclosures of financial transactions involving large sums of money. Requires filing of quarterly reports detailing any transaction valued at \$250,000 or more.

#### **Sec. 102. Greater Disclosure of Foreign Travel Reports**

Requires Members to file foreign travel reports electronically and requires the Clerk to make these reports available online within 48 hours of the submission deadline in a searchable, sortable, downloadable format.

#### **Sec. 103. Greater Disclosure of Gift Reports**

Requires Members to file gift disclosure reports electronically and requires the Clerk to make the reports available on the Internet within 48 hours of filing in a searchable, sortable, downloadable format.

#### **Sec. 104. Greater Disclosure of Earmarks**

Requires Members to post their earmark requests on their websites within 24 hours of submitting requests, and requires the committees accepting requests to post all earmark requests with links to the Members' websites.

Also requires the Clerk and the Secretary in conjunction with the appropriate committees in the House and Senate to work together to create one, centralized database where all earmarks requested are available on the Internet in a searchable, sortable, downloadable format, free of charge to the public.

Earmarks must also be identified as for-profit or not-for-profit.

### **Title II – Enhancing Public Access to the Work of Congressional Committees, Legislation and Votes**

### **Sec. 201. Increase Transparency of Committee Votes**

Requires all committees to post recorded votes on their websites within 24 hours in a structured data (XML) format, rather than “to the maximum extent feasible” as current rules dictate. Exempts Ethics Committee votes.

### **Sec. 202. Increase Transparency of Committee Work**

Requires all committees and subcommittees to post public hearings and markup schedules online as soon as information is available to Members of the committee.

Requires all committees and subcommittees to post online the following information as soon as publically available: topic, related legislation, witness testimonies, opening statements of chair, transcripts and audio/video recordings.

Requires all committees and subcommittees to post online all adopted amendments no later than 24 hours after committee mark-up ends. Excludes technical and conforming changes.

### **Sec. 203. Increase Transparency of Committee Schedules through the Clerk**

Requires the Clerk of the House to provide, in a structured data format, a complete list of all public hearing and mark-up schedules of committees and subcommittees, including links to committee Web sites.

### **Sec. 204. Require All Legislation Be Publically Available 72 Hours Prior to Consideration**

Requires all (non-emergency) legislation be publically available online 72 hours prior to consideration.

### **Sec. 205. Increase Transparency of Recorded Votes**

Requires Clerk of the House to publish the recorded votes of each Member in a structured data format, in such a way that it’s searchable by each member.

Requires each Member to link to the Clerk’s list of recorded votes from their Web sites.

## **Title III – Enhancing Public Access to Congressional Research Service**

### **Sec. 301. Enhance Access to CRS**

Directs the Clerk of the House, in consultation with the Director of CRS, to make publically available online the following CRS information: Issue Briefs, CRS Reports that are available to Members of Congress through the CRS website, and Authorization of Appropriations and Appropriations Products, and requires members and committees to provide links to CRS from their Web sites.

Exempts information deemed confidential by the Director of CRS or the head of the Federal Dept. that provided information, and any confidential research request made by a Member.

Allows for the removal of personal information of CRS employees and does not require CRS to respond to any request made by the public.

## **Title IV Improve Lobbyist Disclosure Requirements**

### **Sec. 401. GAO Study of Lobbyist Registration and Disclosure.**

Requires the Government Accountability Office to initiate a study to examine whether and to what extent individuals exerting substantial influence on the legislative process and executive branch decision-making are avoiding lobbying registration and disclosure and to report to Congress recommendations for initiatives to improve registration and disclosure of influence peddlers.

### **Sec. 402. Expedited Online Registration of Lobbyists; Expansion of Registrants.**

Requires lobbyists to register online within 72 hours of making a lobbying contact or being hired to make a lobbying contact, rather than being able to wait 45 days to register as they currently can.

Decreases the amount that lobbyists can spend per quarter before they have to register from \$10,000 to \$5,000.

### **Sec. 403. Disclosure of Additional Information by Lobbyists**

Requires lobbyists to disclose on lobbying reports, for each specific issue, a list identifying each covered executive branch official and each Member of Congress (or the Member's name when the lobbyist meets with staff) with whom the lobbyist met.

### **Sec. 404. Improve Disclosure of Political Contributions by Lobbyists**

Require lobbyists to report contributions, including bundled contributions, quarterly, rather than semi-annually as they currently do.

### **Sec. 405. Effective Date.**

## **Title V – Transparency in Federal Contracting**

### **Sec. 501. Improving Application Programming Interface and Website Data Elements.**

Requires USAspending.gov to provide new information on federal awards, including:

- The same information about lease agreements that is already required for grants and contracts.
- All information must be available in a machine readable format (such as XML).
- The agency and department as well as subagencies and suboffices that authorized the award.
- Information about the extent of competition in awarding a contract, including, when applicable, an explanation of why a contract was awarded without full and open competition.
- Details about the amount of each contract awarded, including profit incentives and options to expand or extend a contract.
- An indication if an award is the result of a congressionally directed spending item (earmark).

### **Sec. 502. Improving Data Quality**

Improves the quality of the data on USAspending.gov by requiring the Director of OMB to ensure that:

- The Web site provides a simple method for the public to report errors in the data.
- The data posted to USAspending.gov is audited for quality annually.
- Each agency inspector general reviews a sample of agency awards every six months to verify the accuracy of the data submitted to USAspending.gov, reports findings and recommendations to OMB, and makes the findings publically available.

### **Sec. 503. Recipient Performance Transparency**

Requires the unique identifier for each awardee to link to information about that awardee on the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System (FAPIIS).

### **Sec. 503. Improve the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System Database.**

Requires the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) to be made available to the public.

Requires data on FAPIIS to be archived for 10 years.

Requires Federal Awardees to report and FAPIIS to post administrative judgments and legal settlements that do not contain explicit finding or acknowledgement of fault.

### **Sec. 505. Requirements Relating to Reporting of Award Data.**

Requires OMB to develop and implement a specific plan for the collection and reporting of subaward data, including a time frame for including subaward data on USAspending.gov.

Requires OMB to develop and implement a process to regularly ensure that all federal agencies report required award information to USAspending.gov.

Requires OMB to revise the guidance to federal agencies on reporting federal awards to clarify (1) the requirement that award titles describe the award's purpose and; (2) requirements for validating and documenting agency award data submitted by federal agencies.

Requires OMB to include information on the city where work is performed in OMB's public reporting of the completeness of agency data submissions.

## **TITLE VI - Executive Branch Transparency**

### **Sec. 601. Requirement for disclosure of Federal sponsorship of all Federal advertising or other communications.**

Requires every advertisement or other communication paid for by an Executive agency, either directly or through a contract awarded by the Executive agency, to include a prominent notice informing the target audience that the advertisement or other communication is paid for by that Executive agency.

## **Title VII- Strengthening FOIA**

### **Sec. 701. Digital Access to Completed Responses to the Freedom of Information Act.**

Requires each agency to make all of its completed FOIA requests available online in a structured database that is searchable, sortable, and downloadable; or in a format searchable by text as appropriate, within one month of the date the FOIA request was completed.

### **Sec. 702. Commission on Freedom of Information Act Processing Delays**

Establishes a Commission on Freedom of Information Act Processing Delays for the purpose of conducting a study to investigate methods to help reduce delays in processing requests submitted to Federal agencies.

Requires the Commission to submit a report to Congress and the President, no later than 1 year after the passage of this bill, containing conclusions and recommendations.

## **Title VIII – Enforcement**

### **Sec. 801. Audits by the Government Accountability Office**

Requires the GAO to conduct annual audits of the implementation of the provisions in this act, and to report annually to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in the House and Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs in the Senate.

Specifically, the audits will address whether the legislative and executive branch information that is required to be provided to the public through the Internet is: complete, primary, timely, accessible, machine processable, non-discriminatory, non-proprietary, and license-free.