

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6289

To direct the Librarian of Congress to make available to the public the bulk legislative summary and status data used to provide the information posted on the THOMAS website, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

Mr. FOSTER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on House Administration

A BILL

To direct the Librarian of Congress to make available to the public the bulk legislative summary and status data used to provide the information posted on the THOMAS website, 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 “Legislative Data
5 Transparency and Public Access Act of 2010”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Since its launch in 1995, the Web site
2 THOMAS has been an important source of free pub-
3 lic information on Federal legislation.

4 (2) In the years since the introduction of
5 THOMAS, the Internet has evolved into what is
6 commonly referred to as Web 2.0, which encourages
7 the reuse of open source information through collabo-
8 ration, interactivity, and data standardization.

9 (3) Allowing the public to download the THOM-
10 AS Web site’s bulk legislative summary and status
11 data will enable independent Web sites and outside
12 watchdog groups to use the data in new and innova-
13 tive ways that make the proceedings of Congress
14 easier to follow and government more transparent.

15 (4) In its 2007 report on Congressional Infor-
16 mation and the Internet, the Open House Project
17 recommended that Congress “make available to the
18 public a well-supported database of all bill status
19 and summary information currently accessible
20 through the Library of Congress.”

21 (5) The Open House Project also noted that
22 “Six states already publish the status of their state
23 legislation in a structured data format: Connecticut,
24 Illinois . . . Minnesota, Oregon, Texas and Vir-
25 ginia.”

1 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
2 gress that the Library of Congress should work toward
3 improving public access to all THOMAS data, including
4 the text of legislation, in bulk.

5 **SEC. 3. PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF BULK LEGISLATIVE**
6 **DATA.**

7 (a) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY THROUGH INTERNET.—
8 As soon as practicable, the Librarian of Congress, in con-
9 sultation with the Director of the Congressional Research
10 Service, the Public Printer, the Clerk of the House of Rep-
11 resentatives, and the Secretary of the Senate, shall make
12 available to the public through the Internet the bulk legis-
13 lative summary and status data used by the Librarian to
14 provide the information the Librarian posts on the
15 THOMAS Web site.

16 (b) METHOD AND MANNER OF AVAILABILITY.—In
17 making available the bulk legislative data required under
18 subsection (a), the Librarian shall ensure the following:

19 (1) The data is available in a searchable, sort-
20 able, and downloadable manner.

21 (2) The data available for downloading shall in-
22 clude status and summary information on legisla-
23 tion.

24 (3) The data is provided in a structured, non-
25 proprietary format.

1 (4) The data is available free of charge.

2 (5) The data is updated continuously in a time-
3 ly manner.

4 (6) The database involved includes the following
5 supporting information:

6 (A) A roster showing each Member of Con-
7 gress (including each Delegate and Resident
8 Commissioner to the Congress), the Member's
9 committee assignments, and the ZIP Codes in-
10 cluded in each Member's congressional district.

11 (B) Such other supporting information as
12 the Librarian considers appropriate.

13 (7) The data is provided in a manner consistent
14 with the standards developed and published under
15 subsection (c).

16 (c) DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS.—Prior to mak-
17 ing available the bulk legislative data described in sub-
18 section (a), the Librarian of Congress, in consultation with
19 the individuals described in such subsection, shall develop
20 and publish standards for the downloading and public
21 availability of the data, and shall update such standards
22 at such frequency as the Librarian considers appropriate.

23 **SEC. 4. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THOMAS.**

24 (a) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—There is hereby estab-
25 lished in the Library of Congress the Advisory Committee

1 on THOMAS (hereafter in this section referred to as the
2 “Advisory Committee”).

3 (b) MEMBERS.—

4 (1) APPOINTMENT.—The Advisory Committee
5 shall consist of 16 members appointed as follows:

6 (A) Seven individuals appointed by the Li-
7 brarian of Congress who have expertise in dis-
8 ciplines such as legislative access, Internet tech-
9 nology, and open government, and who shall in-
10 clude representatives of academia, the nonprofit
11 sector, the for-profit sector, and users of the
12 THOMAS Web site.

13 (B) Four individuals appointed by the Li-
14 brarian of Congress who are employees of the
15 Federal government with expertise in access to
16 government information and Internet tech-
17 nology.

18 (C) The Law Librarian of Congress (or the
19 Law Librarian’s designee).

20 (D) The Clerk of the House of Representa-
21 tives (or the Clerk’s designee).

22 (E) The Secretary of the Senate (or the
23 Secretary’s designee).

24 (F) The Public Printer (or the Public
25 Printer’s designee).

1 (G) The Director of the Congressional Re-
2 search Service (or the Director's designee).

3 (2) DEADLINE FOR APPOINTMENTS.—The Li-
4 brarian of Congress shall appoint the members de-
5 scribed in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph
6 (1) not later than 60 days after the date of the en-
7 actment of this Act.

8 (3) TERM OF SERVICE; VACANCIES.—Members
9 of the Advisory Committee shall serve for a term of
10 3 years, and may be appointed to additional terms.
11 Any vacancy in the Advisory Committee shall be
12 filled in the manner in which the original appoint-
13 ment was made.

14 (4) NO COMPENSATION.—Members of the Advi-
15 sory Committee shall serve without pay, but shall re-
16 ceive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of
17 subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions
18 under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United
19 States Code. Members of the Advisory Committee
20 who are full-time officers or employees of the United
21 States may not receive additional pay, allowances, or
22 benefits by reason of their service on the Commis-
23 sion.

24 (c) SUPPORT FROM LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS.—The
25 Librarian of Congress shall provide the Advisory Board

1 with the administrative, professional, and technical sup-
2 port required by the Advisory Board to carry out its re-
3 sponsibilities under this section.

4 (d) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Committee shall meet
5 on a regular basis at the call of a majority of its members.
6 Meetings shall be open to the public.

7 (e) DUTIES.—The Advisory Committee shall—

8 (1) review progress toward making all of the
9 data of the THOMAS Web site available in bulk;
10 and

11 (2) provide general advice to the Librarian of
12 Congress on improving digital access and THOMAS
13 services.

14 (f) REPORTS.—Not later than 180 days after the
15 date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter,
16 the Advisory Committee shall submit a report on its activi-
17 ties to the Committee on House Administration of the
18 House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules
19 and Administration of the Senate, and shall include in the
20 report such recommendations as the Advisory Committee
21 considers appropriate.

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