

Union Calendar No. 131

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 313

[Report No. 113-183]

To amend title 5, United States Code, to institute spending limits and transparency requirements for Federal conference and travel expenditures, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 18, 2013

Mrs. EMERSON introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

JULY 30, 2013

Additional sponsors: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Mr. LANKFORD

JULY 30, 2013

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole
House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italie*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on January 18, 2013]

A BILL

To amend title 5, United States Code, to institute spending limits and transparency requirements for Federal conference and travel expenditures, 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 “Government Spending*
5 *Accountability Act of 2013” or the “GSA Act of 2013”.*

6 **SEC. 2. LIMITS AND TRANSPARENCY FOR CONFERENCE**
7 **AND TRAVEL SPENDING.**

8 *(a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 57 of title 5, United States*
9 *Code, is amended by inserting after section 5711 the fol-*
10 *lowing:*

11 **“§5712. Limits and transparency for conference and**
12 **travel spending**

13 *“(a) CONFERENCE TRANSPARENCY AND SPENDING*
14 *LIMITS.—*

15 *“(1) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF CONFERENCE MA-*
16 *TERIALS.—Each agency shall post on the public*
17 *website of that agency detailed information on any*
18 *presentation made by any employee of that agency at*
19 *a conference (except to the extent the head of an agen-*
20 *cy excludes such information for reasons of national*
21 *security) including—*

22 *“(A) the prepared text of any verbal presen-*
23 *tation made; and*

1 “(B) any visual, digital, video, or audio
2 materials presented, including photographs,
3 slides, and audio-visual recordings.

4 “(2) LIMITS ON AMOUNT EXPENDED ON A CON-
5 FERENCE.—

6 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
7 subparagraph (B), an agency may not expend
8 more than \$500,000 to support a single con-
9 ference.

10 “(B) EXCEPTION.—The head of an agency
11 may waive the limitation in subparagraph (A)
12 for a specific conference after making a deter-
13 mination that the expenditure is justified as the
14 most cost-effective option to achieve a compelling
15 purpose. The head of an agency shall submit to
16 the appropriate congressional committees a re-
17 port on any waiver granted under this subpara-
18 graph, including the justification for such waiv-
19 er.

20 “(C) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
21 this paragraph shall be construed to preclude an
22 agency from receiving financial support or other
23 assistance from a private entity to pay or defray
24 the costs of a conference the total cost of which
25 exceeds \$500,000.

1 “(b) *INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE RULE.*—An agency
2 may not pay the travel expenses for more than 50 employees
3 of that agency who are stationed in the United States, for
4 any international conference, unless the Secretary of State
5 determines that attendance for such employees is in the na-
6 tional interest, or the head of the agency determines that
7 attendance for such employees is critical to the agency’s
8 mission. The Secretary of State and the head of an agency
9 shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a
10 report on any waiver granted under this subsection, includ-
11 ing the justification for such waiver.

12 “(c) *REPORTING ON TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE EX-*
13 *PENSES REQUIRED.*—At the beginning of each quarter of
14 each fiscal year, each agency shall post on the public website
15 of that agency a report on each conference that costs more
16 than \$10,000 for which the agency paid travel expenses dur-
17 ing the preceding 3 months that includes—

18 “(1) the itemized expenses paid by the agency,
19 including travel, lodging, and meal expenses, and any
20 other agency expenditures to otherwise support the
21 conference;

22 “(2) the primary sponsor of the conference;

23 “(3) the location of the conference;

24 “(4) the date of the conference;

1 “(5) a brief explanation of how the participation
2 of employees from such agency at the conference ad-
3 vanced the mission of the agency;

4 “(6) the title of any employee, or any individual
5 who is not a Federal employee, whose travel expenses
6 or other conference expenses were paid by the agency;

7 “(7) the total number of individuals whose travel
8 expenses or other conference expenses were paid by the
9 agency; and

10 “(8) in the case of a conference for which that
11 agency was the primary sponsor, a statement that—

12 “(A) describes the cost to the agency of se-
13 lecting the specific conference venue;

14 “(B) describes why the location was selected,
15 including a justification for such selection;

16 “(C) demonstrates the cost efficiency of the
17 location;

18 “(D) provides a cost benefit analysis of
19 holding a conference rather than conducting a
20 teleconference; and

21 “(E) describes any financial support or
22 other assistance from a private entity used to
23 pay or defray the costs of the conference, and for
24 each case where such support or assistance was
25 used, the head of the agency shall include a cer-

1 *tification that there is no conflict of interest re-*
2 *sulting from such support or assistance.*

3 “(d) *FORMAT AND PUBLICATION OF REPORTS.—Each*
4 *report posted on the public website under subsection (c)*
5 *shall—*

6 “(1) *be in a searchable electronic format; and*

7 “(2) *remain on that website for at least 5 years*
8 *after the date of posting.*

9 “(e) *DEFINITIONS.—In this section:*

10 “(1) *AGENCY.—The term ‘agency’ has the mean-*
11 *ing given that term under section 5701, but does not*
12 *include the government of the District of Columbia.*

13 “(2) *CONFERENCE.—The term ‘conference’ means*
14 *a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event*
15 *that—*

16 “(A) *is held for consultation, education, dis-*
17 *cussion, or training; and*

18 “(B) *is not held entirely at a Government*
19 *facility.*

20 “(3) *INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.—The term*
21 *‘international conference’ means a conference occur-*
22 *ring outside the United States attended by representa-*
23 *tives of—*

24 “(A) *the Government of the United States;*
25 *and*

1 “(B) any foreign government, international
2 organization, or foreign nongovernmental orga-
3 nization.”.

4 (b) *TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.*—The
5 table of sections for chapter 57 of title 5, United States
6 Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to
7 section 5711 the following:

 “5712. *Limits and transparency for conference and travel spending.*”.

8 (c) *ANNUAL TRAVEL EXPENSE LIMITS.*—

9 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—In the case of each of fiscal
10 years 2014 through 2018, an agency (as defined
11 under section 5712(e) of title 5, United States Code,
12 as added by subsection (a)) may not make, or obligate
13 to make, expenditures for travel expenses, in an ag-
14 gregate amount greater than 70 percent of the aggre-
15 gate amount of such expenses for fiscal year 2010.

16 (2) *IDENTIFICATION OF TRAVEL EXPENSES.*—

17 (A) *RESPONSIBILITIES.*—Not later than
18 September 30, 2013, and after consultation with
19 the Administrator of General Services and the
20 Director of the Administrative Office of the
21 United States Courts, the Director of the Office
22 of Management and Budget shall establish guide-
23 lines for the determination of what expenses con-
24 stitute travel expenses for purposes of this sub-
25 section. The guidelines shall identify specific ex-

1 *penses, and classes of expenses, that are to be*
2 *treated as travel expenses.*

3 *(B) EXEMPTION FOR MILITARY TRAVEL.—*

4 *The guidelines required under subparagraph (A)*
5 *shall exclude military travel expenses in deter-*
6 *mining what expenses constitute travel expenses.*
7 *Military travel expenses shall include travel ex-*
8 *penses involving military combat, the training*
9 *or deployment of uniformed military personnel,*
10 *and such other travel expenses as determined by*
11 *the Director of the Office of Management and*
12 *Budget, in consultation with the Administrator*
13 *of General Services and the Director of the Ad-*
14 *ministrative Office of the United States Courts.*

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