

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES. 34

Directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to provide members of the public with Internet access to certain Congressional Research Service publications, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 14, 2015

Mr. LANCE (for himself, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. POLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

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## RESOLUTION

Directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to provide members of the public with Internet access to certain Congressional Research Service publications, and for other purposes.

1       *Resolved,*

2       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.**

3       (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the  
4 “Public Access to Congressional Research Service Reports  
5 Resolution of 2015” or the “Congressional Research Serv-  
6 ice Electronic Accessibility Resolution of 2015”.

7       (b) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds the following:

1           (1) The Congressional Research Service, a spe-  
2           cial reference unit within the Library of Congress,  
3           offers invaluable research and analysis to Members  
4           of Congress on all current and emerging issues of  
5           national policy.

6           (2) The Congressional Research Service staff of  
7           approximately 700 employees, including lawyers,  
8           economists, reference librarians, and social, natural,  
9           and physical scientists, are governed by require-  
10          ments for accuracy, objectivity, balance, and non-  
11          partisanship.

12          (3) The Congressional Research Service has a  
13          responsibility to ensure that Members of Congress  
14          have available the best possible information and  
15          analysis on which to base the policy decisions the  
16          American people have elected them to make.

17          (4) It is often burdensome, difficult, and time-  
18          consuming for citizens to obtain access to objective  
19          and nonpartisan policy analysis on issues affecting  
20          their interests.

21          (5) It will enhance our democracy to provide  
22          citizens with access to unbiased and accurate CRS  
23          documents on legislation and other critical issues be-  
24          fore Congress.

1           (6) Allowing public access to CRS will empower  
2 citizens and enable Members of Congress to become  
3 even more effective “representatives” of the public’s  
4 concerns and goals.

5 **SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN CONGRESSIONAL RE-**  
6 **SEARCH SERVICE INFORMATION.**

7           (a) ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF DATA-  
8 BASE OF INFORMATION.—

9           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Clerk of the House of  
10 Representatives, in consultation with the Director of  
11 the Congressional Research Service, shall establish  
12 and maintain a centralized, searchable, bulk  
13 downloadable, electronic database consisting of—

14           (A) all of the information described in  
15 paragraph (2) that is available to Members, of-  
16 ficers, employees, and offices of the House of  
17 Representatives through the Congressional Re-  
18 search Service website; and

19           (B) in accordance with subsection (b), an  
20 index of the information described in subpara-  
21 graph (A).

22           (2) INFORMATION DESCRIBED.—The informa-  
23 tion described in this paragraph is as follows:

24           (A) Congressional Research Service Issue  
25 Briefs.

1 (B) Congressional Research Service Re-  
2 ports.

3 (C) Congressional Research Service Au-  
4 thorization of Appropriations Products and Ap-  
5 propriations Products.

6 (D) Materials intended or available for  
7 general congressional distribution that are the  
8 same or substantially similar in content to CRS  
9 Reports, Issue Briefs, and Appropriations Prod-  
10 ucts.

11 (3) SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR MATERIALS IN-  
12 CLUDED.—With respect to each issue brief, product,  
13 or report included in the database under this sub-  
14 section, the Clerk shall include—

15 (A) the name and identification number;

16 (B) the dates of initial release and updates  
17 (if any); and

18 (C) the Congressional Research Service di-  
19 vision or divisions that were responsible for its  
20 production.

21 (4) UPDATES.—The Clerk, in consultation with  
22 the Director, shall ensure that the information in  
23 the database under this subsection is updated auto-  
24 matically and electronically to reflect the availability

1 of new information and updates to existing informa-  
2 tion described in paragraph (2).

3 (5) INITIAL INFORMATION.—The initial estab-  
4 lishment of the database under this subsection shall  
5 include all of the contents described in paragraph  
6 (1) as of the date on which this resolution is agreed  
7 to.

8 (b) INDEX OF DATABASE INFORMATION.—In addi-  
9 tion to the database under subsection (a), the Clerk, in  
10 consultation with the Director, shall establish and main-  
11 tain contemporaneously a website containing a searchable,  
12 sortable index of all of the information in the database  
13 in both human-readable and machine-readable formats  
14 (such as XML) that includes for each issue brief, product,  
15 or report in the database—

16 (1) the name and identification number;

17 (2) the dates of initial release and updates (if  
18 any); and

19 (3) the Congressional Research Service division  
20 or divisions that were responsible for its production.

21 (c) LIMITATIONS.—

22 (1) CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.—Subsections  
23 (a) and (b) do not apply to—

24 (A) any information that is confidential, as  
25 determined by—

1 (i) the Director; or

2 (ii) the head of a Federal department  
3 or agency that provided the information to  
4 the Congressional Research Service; or

5 (B) any document that—

6 (i) is the product of a confidential re-  
7 search request made by a Member, officer,  
8 employee, or office of the House of Rep-  
9 resentatives;

10 (ii) has not been distributed to any in-  
11 dividual or office other than the individual  
12 or office making the request; and

13 (iii) is not intended for distribution to  
14 any person other than the individual or of-  
15 fice making the request.

16 (2) REDACTION AND REVISION.—In carrying  
17 out this section, the Clerk, on the basis of informa-  
18 tion provided by the Director, may—

19 (A) remove from the information included  
20 in the database (including from the issue brief,  
21 product, or report itself) the name and contact  
22 information regarding an employee of the Con-  
23 gressional Research Service;

24 (B) remove from the information included  
25 in the database (including from the issue brief,

1 product, or report itself) any material for which  
2 the Director determines that including the in-  
3 formation on the database may infringe the  
4 copyright of a work protected under title 17,  
5 United States Code; and

6 (C) make any changes in the information  
7 included in the database (including from the  
8 issue brief, product, or report itself) that the  
9 Director determines necessary to ensure that  
10 the information is accurate and current, except  
11 that if the Clerk makes any such change with  
12 respect to any material in the database, the  
13 Clerk shall indicate in the database (with such  
14 notation as the Clerk considers appropriate)  
15 that more current information is available with  
16 respect to the material than the information  
17 provided in the database.

18 (3) METHOD OF REDACTION.—The Clerk shall  
19 carry out any redaction under paragraph (2)(C) in  
20 a manner which removes the least amount of mate-  
21 rial necessary to carry out the purposes of the redac-  
22 tion.

23 (4) ASSISTANCE FROM DIRECTOR FOR AUTO-  
24 MATIC REDACTION.—The Clerk shall consult with  
25 the Director to ensure the availability and implemen-

1 tation of such technology as may be necessary to fa-  
2 cilitate the automatic redaction of information under  
3 this subsection.

4 (d) FURNISHING OF NECESSARY INFORMATION.—

5 The Clerk shall consult with the Director to ensure that  
6 the Clerk is provided with all of the information necessary  
7 to carry out this section in such format as the Clerk con-  
8 siders appropriate.

9 **SEC. 3. OTHER METHODS OF PUBLIC ACCESS.**

10 (a) ACCESS THROUGH WEBSITES OF MEMBERS AND

11 COMMITTEES.—Each official public website of a Member  
12 of the House of Representatives, a committee of the House  
13 of Representatives, or a joint committee of the Congress  
14 shall permit members of the public to use the website to  
15 obtain the information contained in the database estab-  
16 lished under section 2, in the same manner and to the  
17 same extent as Members, officers, employees, and offices  
18 of the House of Representatives may obtain such informa-  
19 tion through the Congressional Research Service website.

20 (b) REGULATIONS.—Subsection (a) shall be carried

21 out in accordance with regulations promulgated by the  
22 Committee on House Administration of the House of Rep-  
23 resentatives.

24 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

25 In this Act—



1           (1) the term “Clerk” means the Clerk of the  
2 House of Representatives;

3           (2) the term “Director” means the Director of  
4 the Congressional Research Service; and

5           (3) the term “Member of the House of Rep-  
6 resentatives” includes a Delegate or Resident Com-  
7 missioner to the Congress.

8 **SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

9           This resolution shall take effect upon the expiration  
10 of the 6-month period which begins on the date on which  
11 the resolution is agreed to, without regard to whether the  
12 regulations described in section 3(b) or any other regula-  
13 tions have been promulgated prior to the expiration of  
14 such period.

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