

July 18, 2019

Subject: Endorsement of the Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act (S. 2177)

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Peters:

The Data Coalition strongly supports the bipartisan Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act (S. 2177), as reintroduced by Senators James Lankford and Maggie Hassan. This re-introduced legislation leverages and builds upon recent data-centric reforms like the 2014 Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (P.L. 113-101) and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (P.L. 115-435). It will provide the American public, Congress, and federal managers valuable information to make informed decisions about the operations of the federal government. The bill will increase transparency and accountability across federal agencies, and ultimately help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of federal programs.

By using the government-wide financial data standards established by the DATA Act and existing data elements for agency budget formation, the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act further solidifies the federal government's commitment to making information about federal expenditures more readily available and transparent to the American taxpayers. The resulting program inventory, presented as accessible open data, will enable policymakers to leverage emerging technologies and apply best practices for data analytics best practices. This will increase the understanding of how to improve the productivity and impact of federal programs delivering valuable services to the American public.

The legislation also leverages the recently enacted Evidence Act's establishment of government-wide processes for robust information management and improving the use of data for program evaluation. By requiring an open data program inventory the legislation ensures that data users will be able to download, analyze, and freely reuse government data to generate insights about the U.S. government's operations.

The Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act builds on recent progress for modernizing federal agencies' operations to align with the needs in the Information Age. We urge the 116th Congress to take timely action to advance this important legislation to enable taxpayers and policymakers to transform data into actionable information, and use that evidence to develop sound public policy.

Sincerely,



Nick Hart, Ph.D.
CEO
Data Coalition