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DATA Act Passes U.S. House

President Urged to Endorse Landmark Open Data Legislation

WASHINGTON, DC – The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act ([DATA Act](#)) passed the United States House of Representatives this evening by a 388–1 vote. The landmark transparency bill ([H.R. 2061](#)) would standardize and publish federal spending data.

"We are hopeful that the Senate will answer this call from the House of Representatives to reap the rewards from greater accountability and tech-sector innovation that real spending transparency can provide," said Hudson Hollister, the Executive Director of the Data Transparency Coalition. "And President Obama should put the goals of his Open Data Policy into action by publicly endorsing the DATA Act. As Comptroller General Gene Dodaro testified in July, without this legislative mandate, spending transparency won't happen."

The DATA Act would require the Treasury Department to create government-wide data standards for agency financial reports, payments, budget actions, contract reporting, and grant reporting, direct agencies to use those data standards, and mandate that information be published online. Once it is fully implemented, the DATA Act will be the most significant federal transparency reform since President Johnson signed the Freedom of Information Act in 1967.

"The American people deserve a functioning government that is both open and accountable," said Majority Leader Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA) on the House floor. "The DATA Act is an important step to achieving this goal, because it will publish federal spending data and transform it from disconnected documents into open, searchable data for people to see and read through online."

Although key features of the House bill remain unchanged from the original iteration that passed the House Oversight Committee in May, some minor amendments were included. A fiscal offset was added to the bill, which was scored last week by the Congressional Budget Office.

The comprehensive House bill retains an accountability platform that was [removed](#) from the upper chamber's companion legislation on November 6, when it passed the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. The provision would expand the mandate of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board's Recovery Operations Center, which used open data analytics to eliminate potential waste and fraud in stimulus spending, to cover all federal disbursements rather than just stimulus grants and contracts.

The two chambers will need to reconcile the differences between the two bills. The Data Transparency Coalition supports the use of a conference committee to produce a unified bill aligned with the broad bipartisan consensus that has emerged around the House version of the legislation. Earlier this month, the

Coalition joined with 24 other organizations from across the political spectrum in signing a public [letter](#) endorsing the version of the DATA Act that was originally introduced in the House.

On December 5, the Data Transparency Coalition will hold the [first installment](#) of a new breakfast series, presented by PwC, exploring the impact of the DATA Act and similar policies across government. Staffers from the Department of the Treasury's Fiscal Service and the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board -- the two agencies poised to oversee implementation of the DATA Act -- will lead the discussion at the breakfast, entitled "Open Data: Transforming Federal Management and Accountability."

Members of the media may request complimentary tickets, subject to availability, by contacting zack.pesavento@datacoalition.org.

About the Data Transparency Coalition

The Data Transparency Coalition is a trade association that advocates for data reform in the U.S. government. The Coalition brings together technology companies, nonprofit organizations, and individuals to support policies that require federal agencies to publish their data online, using standardized, machine-readable, nonproprietary data standards. The coalition is steered by a board of advisors. Members include sector leaders such as Teradata Corporation, WebFilings, RR Donnelley, and PwC, and smaller start-ups such as Level One Technologies, and BrightScope. For more information, visit <http://datacoalition.org/>.

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