

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3762

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 8, 2009

Mr. KRATOVIL (for himself and Mr. LANCE) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

A BILL

To provide members of the public with Internet access to certain Congressional Research Service publications, 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; FINDINGS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Congressional Research Service Electronic Accessibility
6 Act of 2009”.

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

8 (1) The Congressional Research Service, a spe-
9 cial reference unit within the Library of Congress,
10 offers invaluable research and analysis to Members

1 of Congress on all current and emerging issues of
2 national policy.

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

9 (3) The Congressional Research Service has a
10 responsibility to ensure that Members of the House
11 and Senate have available the best possible informa-
12 tion and analysis on which to base the policy deci-
13 sions the American people have elected them to
14 make.

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

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

23 (6) Allowing public access to CRS will empower
24 citizens and enable Members of Congress to become

1 even more effective “representatives” of the public’s
2 concerns and goals.

3 **SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF CERTAIN CONGRESSIONAL RE-**
4 **SEARCH SERVICE INFORMATION.**

5 (a) ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF DATA-
6 BASE OF INFORMATION.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Clerk of the House of
8 Representatives and the Secretary of Senate, work-
9 ing jointly and in consultation with the Director of
10 the Congressional Research Service, shall establish
11 and maintain a centralized, searchable, electronic
12 database consisting of—

13 (A) all of the information described in
14 paragraph (2) that is available to Members, of-
15 ficers, employees, and offices of the House of
16 Representatives or Senate through the Congres-
17 sional Research Service website; and

18 (B) an index of the information described
19 in subparagraph (A).

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

22 (A) Congressional Research Service Issue
23 Briefs.

24 (B) Congressional Research Service Re-
25 ports.

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

4 (b) LIMITATIONS.—

5 (1) CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.—Subsection
6 (a) does not apply to—

7 (A) any information that is confidential, as
8 determined by—

9 (i) the Director, or

10 (ii) the head of a Federal department
11 or agency that provided the information to
12 the Congressional Research Service; or

13 (B) any document that is the product of a
14 confidential research request made by a Mem-
15 ber, officer, employee, or office of the House of
16 Representatives or Senate.

17 (2) REDACTION AND REVISION.—In carrying
18 out this section, the Clerk and the Secretary, on the
19 basis of information provided by the Director,
20 may—

21 (A) remove from the information included
22 in the database the name and phone number of,
23 and any other information regarding, an em-
24 ployee of the Congressional Research Service;

1 (B) remove from the information included
2 in the database any material for which the Di-
3 rector determines that including the informa-
4 tion on the database may infringe the copyright
5 of a work protected under title 17, United
6 States Code; and

7 (C) make any changes in the information
8 included in the database that the Director de-
9 termines necessary to ensure that the informa-
10 tion is accurate and current.

11 (c) **PRIOR APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED.**—Notwith-
12 standing any provision of law to the contrary, the Director
13 may take such actions as may be necessary to enable the
14 Clerk and Secretary to establish and maintain the data-
15 base under this section, including providing the informa-
16 tion described in subsection (a)(2), without obtaining the
17 prior approval of the Committee on Rules and Administra-
18 tion of the Senate, the Committee on House Administra-
19 tion of the House of Representatives, or the Joint Com-
20 mittee on Printing.

21 **SEC. 3. METHOD OF PUBLIC ACCESS.**

22 (a) **ACCESS THROUGH WEBSITES OF MEMBERS AND**
23 **COMMITTEES.**—Each official public website of a Member
24 of the House of Representatives or Senate, a committee
25 of the House of Representatives or Senate, or a joint com-

1 mittee of the Congress shall permit members of the public
2 to use the website to obtain the information contained in
3 the database established under section 2, in the same
4 manner and to the same extent as Members, officers, em-
5 ployees, and offices of the House of Representatives and
6 Senate may obtain such information through the Congres-
7 sional Research Service website.

8 (b) REGULATIONS.—Subsection (a) shall be carried
9 out—

10 (1) in the case of websites of Members and
11 committees of the House of Representatives, in ac-
12 cordance with regulations promulgated by the Com-
13 mittee on House Administration of the House of
14 Representatives;

15 (2) in the case of websites of Members and
16 committees of the Senate, in accordance with regula-
17 tions promulgated by the Committee on Rules and
18 Administration of the Senate; and

19 (3) in the case of any other website to which
20 subsection (a) applies, in accordance with regula-
21 tions promulgated jointly by the Committee on
22 House Administration of the House of Representa-
23 tives and the Committee on Rules and Administra-
24 tion of the Senate.

1 **SEC. 4. NO RESPONSE TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES REQUIRED.**

2 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to require the
3 Director to respond to any inquiry made by a member of
4 the public with respect to any of the information contained
5 in the database established and maintained under section
6 2 or made available the public on the Internet pursuant
7 to section 3.

8 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

9 In this Act—

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

12 (2) the term “Director” means the Director of
13 the Congressional Research Service;

14 (3) the term “Member of the House of Rep-
15 resentatives” includes a Delegate or Resident Com-
16 missioner to the Congress; and

17 (4) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary
18 of the Senate.

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