

Big Picture

- * The Senate should adopt a presumption of transparency for its operations, which includes proactive online disclosure of its information except when infeasible
- * The Senate should regularly conduct an audit of all the information it holds, and release an index of that information on an annual basis, including where the information is held and whether it can be made available to the public

Improving Transparency of Senate Administrative and Ethics-Reporting Functions

- * All the public documents held by the Secretary of the Senate for public review, but not one, should be made available online
http://www.opencongress.org/wiki/Senate_Office_of_Public_Records
- * Create a Senate equivalent of the Office of Congressional Ethics, an independent ethics watchdog <http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/taxonomy/term/Office-of-Congressional-Ethics/>
- * The time during which committee records are sealed in the Archives should be reduced
- * Publish a Senate staff directory
- * Senate "Dear Colleague" letters should be available publicly
- * Campaign Finance Information filed with the Senate should be allowed to be directly filed with the FEC

Improving Access to Legislative Information

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- * Require bulk access to senate legislative data (as held by THOMAS/ congress.gov)
<http://sunlightfoundation.com/policy/documents/public-access-legislative-information-recommendati/> -- this would empower others to reuse legislative information, and support alerting tools for amendments
- * Put Senate internal expenditures online as a database instead of a PDF
<http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2011/11/30/senate-finally-publishes-its-spending-online-but-could-do-much-better/>

Improve Senate and Public Understanding of Legislative Issues Considered by the Senate

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- * Put all CRS Reports online

<http://sunlightfoundation.com/policy/documents/daniel-schuman-testimony-house-committee-appropriations> See also H Res 727 (there's Senate versions too formerly introduced by Sen.

Lieberman in previous congresses)

<http://beta.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/house-resolution/727?q=congressional+research+service> Also see http://www.opencongress.org/wiki/Congressional_Research_Service_Reports

- * Make all reports submitted to the Senate available online (like ACMRA would require)

<http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2012/07/18/agency-report-transparency-bill-set-for-markup-to-morrow/>

- * Put other reports authored by or for Senate support offices and agencies (e.g. the the Secretary of the Senate) online // at a minimum, make available to the public

- * Require the Constitution Annotated (a legal treatise prepared for the Senate by the LOC that explains the Constitution) to be made available online as it is updated in XML, not every 10 years in plain text

<http://sunlightfoundation.com/policy/documents/public-access-constitution-annotated/>

Improve access to info about Senate proceedings/ legislation

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- * All senate amendments should be available online in a useful format, just like the House does, and not buried in the congressional record; should be available prior to votes --> look to docs.house.gov as an example

- * All of the filed nominations information should be available online (the disclosure info of ppl who are nominated by prez)

- * Legislation (including a final committee report, when appropriate) should be available online for 72 hours prior to a final senate vote (including a motion for unanimous consent)

Improve Committee Activity Disclosure

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- * Require all hearings (cmttee/ sub c) be webcast //

<http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2012/04/17/committees-make-leap-to-online-video-but-appropriations-doesn%E2%80%99t-get-the-picture/>

* Close the loophole whereby earmarks are inserted into legislation (or nearmarks) without disclosure

<http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2010/12/10/leading-by-example-earmark-transparency/>

* Require all markups to be made available to the public prior to consideration by committee or subcommittee

* All documents from hearings (including transcripts) should be finalized and released to the public within X days. Draft (unofficial) transcripts, vote counts, markups, and related information should be released within a week regardless of when or whether the official version is published

* Senate committees should write and publish oversight plans, with annual update reports