

Legislative Agenda 2013

Enact the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act

Congress should adopt the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA) to establish an open and accountable system for tracking every dollar that the federal government spends.

Background

The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act would expand the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) to fully disclose Federal agency expenditures so taxpayers and policy makers can view the full cycle of spending for Federal funds. It also requires that Federal data be analyzed to prevent waste, fraud, abuse and improper payments and it takes steps to simplify financial reporting and improve the quality of the spending data. DATA would:

- **Make Federal Spending Transparent:** DATA will expand FFATA to include spending data for all federal funds by appropriation, federal agency, sub-agency, account, program activity, object class, and maintains current reporting for federal awards like contracts, grants and loans. This expansion of USASpending.gov will allow policy makers and the public to track federal funds more clearly and link spending to budget priorities.
- **Set Government-wide Financial Data Standards:** To improve data quality, the Department of Treasury, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget and other government agencies would establish financial data standards for the Federal agencies creating a single framework to be used across the government to make it easier to compare federal spending.
- **Establish a Federal Accountability Spending Transparency (FAST) Board:** A five member interagency advisory board would report to Congress on ways to enhance federal spending transparency.
- **Reduce Recipient Reporting Requirements:** This legislation requires the Office of Management and Budget to streamline the existing Federal award recipient financial reporting to reduce compliance costs based on the new financial data standards.
- **Use Data to Prevent Waste:** The Department of Treasury will analyze the data collected to prevent improper payments before or after disbursements are made and share analysis with agencies to prevent waste, fraud and abuse. Treasury will be provided access to other Federal data sources needed to conduct the financial analysis.
- **Improve Data Quality:** The Inspectors General at each agency will be required to provide a report every two years on the quality and accuracy of the financial data provided to USASpending.gov. The Government Accountability Office will also provide a report every two years following the Inspectors Generals findings to create a government-wide scorecard on the data quality and accuracy of the financial data reported.