

May 17, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
361-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

We write on behalf of the undersigned group of 100 business, public interest, and historical groups and associations to endorse the OPEN Government Act of 2007 (S. 849), as introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy and Senator John Cornyn.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is the public's most significant tool for ensuring integrity and accountability from the federal government. Unfortunately, FOIA's promise of ensuring an open and accountable government has been seriously undermined by the excessive processing delays that FOIA requesters face across the government. The OPEN Government Act would:

- Close loopholes in FOIA;
- Help the public get timely responses to FOIA requests; and
- Improve agency accountability and require better management of FOIA programs.

The public's confidence in the executive branch has reached a dramatic low point. The OPEN Government Act of 2007 would demonstrate bipartisan congressional leadership to restore public faith in government and to advance the ideals of openness that our democracy embodies. The Senate Judiciary Committee has reported favorably upon the bill without any amendments. We urge you to support this legislation and help it move quickly to the Senate floor for a vote.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Justice
America Association of Law Libraries
American Association of Small Property
Owners
American Booksellers Foundation for Free
Expression
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
American Families United
American Library Association
Animal Welfare Institute
ASPCA

Assassination Archives and Research Center
Association of American Publishers
Bill of Rights Defense Committee
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance
Blancett Ranches, Aztec, NM
Californians Aware
Californians for Western Wilderness
Center for Democracy and Technology
Center for Energy Research
Center for National Security Studies
Citizen Action New Mexico

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Common Cause
Community Recovery Services
Conservation Congress
Doctors for Open Government
DownsizeDC.org, Inc.
The E-Accountability Foundation/Parentadvocates.org
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Environmental Defense Institute
Environmental Integrity Project
Ethics in Government Group
Fernald Residents for Environmental Safety & Health, Inc.
Florida First Amendment Foundation
Forest Guardians
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of Animals
Friends of the Wild Swan
Georgia ForestWatch
Georgians for Open Government
Government Accountability Project
Great Basin Mine Watch
Gun Owners of America
HALT, Inc
The Health Integrity Project
HEAL Utah
The Humane Society of the United States
Idaho Sporting Congress, Inc.
Indiana Coalition for Open Government
The James Madison Project
Law Librarian Association of Greater New York
Law Librarians Association of Wisconsin
League of Women Voters of the U.S.
Liberty Coalition
Los Alamos Study Group
Maine Association of Broadcasters
Mine Safety and Health News
The Multiracial Activist
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Freedom of Information Coalition
National Security Archive
National Taxpayers Union

National Treasury Employees Union
National Whistleblower Center
Natural Resources Defense Council
The New Grady Coalition
No FEAR Coalition
Northern California Association of Law Libraries
Northwest Environmental Advocates
Nuclear Watch New Mexico
Okanogan Highlands Bottling Company
OMB Watch
Open Society Policy Center
OpenTheGovernment.org
Oregon Natural Desert Association
Oregon PeaceWorks
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, Inc.
People For the American Way
Project On Government Oversight
Public Citizen
ReadtheBill.org Education Fund
Republican Liberty Caucus
Reynolds, Motl & Sherwood, PLLP
The Rutherford Institute
Sagebrush Sea Campaign
Simmelweis Society International
Snake River Alliance
Society of American Archivists
Society of Professional Journalists
Southern California Association of Law Libraries
Southwest Research and Information Center
The Student Health Integrity Project
Tax Analysts
Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment)
Union of Concerned Scientists
VA Whistleblowers Coalition
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Lands Project
Western Resource Advocates
The Wilderness Society
Wild Wilderness
Wilderness Workshop

cc: Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, Sen. John Cornyn, Sen. Sherrod Brown, Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin, Sen. Russell D. Feingold, Sen. Johnny Isakson, Sen. John F. Kerry, Sen. Mary Landrieu, Sen. Bernard Sanders, Sen. Arlen Specter