

# Sunshine in Government Initiative

1156 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 1250  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone (202) 795-9305

sunshineingovernment.org  
info@sunshineingovernment.org  
@sunshineingov



March 25, 2015

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz  
Chairman  
United States House Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform  
2157 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elijah Cummings  
Ranking Member  
United States House Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform  
2471 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings,

The Sunshine in Government Initiative writes to support H.R. 653, the FOIA Oversight and Improvement Act of 2015. We respectfully urge the Committee to vote to approve this legislation so it may be considered by the full House of Representatives.

SGI is a coalition of media associations that for a decade has promoted ways to improve FOIA. This legislation represents an opportunity for Congress to act in a bipartisan way to make our government more open and accountable to the American public. The legislation is nearly identical to legislation that the U.S. House passed 410-0 last year.

The provisions in H.R. 653 focus on making the FOIA process work more reliably and efficiently. By enacting H.R. 653, Congress would clarify that the Office of Government Information Services speaks with an independent voice and its testimony and recommendations should not be reviewed ahead of time by the Office of Management and Budget or any other federal agency. It also requires a central portal for agencies to receive requests.

For the foregoing reasons, we strongly support H.R. 653 and urge the Committee to approve this legislation so it may be considered by the full House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Blum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rick Blum  
Director

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American Society of News Editors ♦ The Associated Press ♦ Association of Alternative Newsmedia  
♦ National Newspaper Association ♦ Newspaper Association of America ♦  
Online News Association ♦ Radio Television Digital News Association ♦  
Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press ♦ Society of Professional Journalists