

March 14, 2016

Senator Grassley
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator John Cornyn
Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Endorsement of Immediate Passage of FOIA Improvement Act of 2016

disclosed records publicly available in an electronic format. It also would require the creation of a consolidated online request portal, streamlining the FOIA process significantly by allowing the public to submit requests through a single website;

Ending secrecy for 25-year-old drafts and other internal deliberations not otherwise exempt from disclosure, thereby ensuring that agencies cannot abuse FOIA's Exemption 5 to withhold historical records that will help the public better understand how a policy was developed;

Increasing the effectiveness of the FOIA by making the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) more independent.

We make this request during Sunshine Week 2016 (March 13-19), a nationwide initiative to highlight the importance of open government and the imperative of strengthening transparency at all levels of government. We also note that there would be no more appropriate way for Congress to honor the upcoming 50th anniversary of the FOIA on July 4th, 2016, than by passing S. 337 to strengthen the law. We stand ready to aid your efforts to ensure that the nation can celebrate FOIA's 50th anniversary with a stronger and better statute, one that enhances the public's capacity to hold its officials accountable and to understand the workings of our democracy.

Thank you again for your commitment to a strong FOIA, and to open and accountable government. To consult further about these issues, please contact Patrice McDermott, Executive Director of

