

American Library Association

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House Passes Open Government Legislation, Senate Introduces Companion Bill

With support from both sides of the aisle, the [U.S. House of Representatives yesterday passed three important open government bills](#). Open government is something that ALA has long fought for and we support equal, ready, and equitable access to government information.

The bills that passed the House yesterday are:

- [H.R. 1309](#), the **Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 2007**, which includes reforms to reduce backlogs and delays in responding to [Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)] requests and remove recent restrictions, such as those imposed by former Attorney General John Ashcroft in 2001, that have undermined the FOIA;
- [H.R. 1255](#), the **Presidential Records Act Amendments of 2007**, which revokes one of President's Bush's executive orders and other restrictions on access to presidential records imposed in 2001;
- [H.R. 985](#), the **Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2007**, which overturns a harmful U.S. Supreme Court decision from 2006, *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, which ruled that public employees could not claim First Amendment protection when they voice concerns to their supervisors. Over 21 million public employees rely on the First Amendment as their sole means of whistleblower protection. Whistleblowers have time and again been instrumental in revealing information that the public, press, and legislators have needed to know to investigate and assure oversight and public accountability.

At the above links, you can see if your Representative voted for these bills. If they did, thank them!

On March 13, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) introduced **S. 849**, a companion Freedom of Information bill that would "promote accessibility, accountability, and openness in Government by strengthening section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly referred to as the Freedom of Information Act), and for other purposes."

Other News:

[Sports Illustrated will make swimsuit issue available to libraries](#)

[YALSA celebrates the first-ever Support Teen Literature Day as part of National Library Week](#)

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[Senator Leahy's press release](#) on the bill lists a broad coalition of organizations that support open government, **including ALA**.

Contact your Senators and tell them you support this bill!



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U.S. Capitol switchboard 202-225-3121