

March 4, 2022

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
Chair  
Committee on House Administration  
1306 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rodney Davis  
Ranking Member  
Committee on House Administration  
1216 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee on House Administration:

We request the Committee on House Administration address a gap in public access to public records held by the Office of the Clerk. The Clerk manages the Legislative Resource Center (LRC), which makes available lobbying disclosure filings, other public disclosure forms from all House Officers, Members, and staff, and other records.<sup>1</sup> While some of those records are available online, others are not, including Legal Expense Fund Disclosures.<sup>2</sup> The House of Representatives has been closed to the public for nearly two years, impeding public access to these records and undermining the purpose of public disclosure.

Many documents maintained by the Clerk within the LRC are in digital form but are not available online. Instead, requesters must use a terminal located in the LRC and print out the records — it is not currently possible to make an electronic copy. While this practice may have been reasonable when it was instituted, its consequences are two fold. First, most members of the public and press must go to the office to access these documents, which in normal circumstances limits access to those in Washington, D.C. and in COVID times restricts access further. Second, paid services such as printing, scanning, and digitizing the documents create unequal access for those who can afford the costs. This is a perverse result.

Please direct the Clerk to examine how to make these public documents available online in a user-friendly format and provide a plan of action for review and implementation. We would welcome the opportunity with them to find a way forward. Please contact Daniel Schuman, policy director at Demand Progress, at [Daniel@demandprogress.org](mailto:Daniel@demandprogress.org).

Sincerely,

Bipartisan Policy Center  
Campaign for Accountability  
Campaign Legal Center  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see *Public Disclosure*, Office of the Clerk, United States House of Representatives <https://disclosures-clerk.house.gov/>

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see *Legal Expense Fund Disclosures*, Office of the Clerk, United States House of Representatives <https://disclosures-clerk.house.gov/PublicDisclosure/LegalExpenseFund>

CODEPINK  
Community Research  
Constitutional Alliance  
Consumer Action  
Defending Rights and Dissent  
Democracy for America  
Fix the Court  
Government Information Watch  
GovTrack.us  
Greenpeace USA  
Issue One  
Levin Center at Wayne Law  
Media Alliance  
NALEO Educational Fund  
National Freedom of Information Coalition  
National Security Archive  
Open The Government  
OpenSecrets  
Pay Our Interns  
People For The American Way  
Project On Government Oversight  
Protect Democracy  
Public Citizen  
R Street Institute  
Rachel Carson Council  
Revolving Door Project  
RootsAction.org  
Social Security Works  
Take on Wall Street  
The Digital Democracy Project  
Unite America  
X-Lab

Kevin Kosar, American Enterprise Institute\*

Norman Ornstein, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research\*

Robert Cook-Deegan, Arizona State University\*

Lorelei Kelly, Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation at Georgetown University\*

Jodie Evans, CODEPINK\*

Jason Pye, Due Process Institute\*

Kevin Esterling, University of California, Riverside\*

\*= Affiliation listed for identification purposes only.

cc: Members of the Committee on House Administration  
Members of the House Ethics Committee