

AALL ACTION ALERT
October 16, 2009

YOUR HELP NEEDED TO GET FREE ONLINE ACCESS TO CRS REPORTS

BACKGROUND

AALL believes that the public has a right to free online access to tax-payer funded Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports. We are very pleased that there is legislation pending in the Senate ([S. Res. 118](#)) and House ([H.R. 3762](#)) to meet this goal. Very importantly, both bills would also require that an index of reports and issue briefs be made publicly available.

In April, Sen. Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT), Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), and five additional co-sponsors introduced S. Res. 118 to make CRS reports freely available on the Internet. In a May 11, 2009 [editorial](#), the *New York Times* reported that Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY), Chair of the Rules and Administration Committee, was “working on a plan” that would make CRS reports publicly available, but Chairman Schumer has not yet announced the plan. We need your help to put pressure on Sen. Schumer to bring S. Res. 118 before the committee this year.

On the House side, Representatives Frank Kratovil (D-MD-1) and Leonard Lance (R-NJ-7) introduced the *Congressional Research Service Electronic Accessibility Act of 2009* ([H.R. 3762](#)) on October 8. This bill would provide the public with free online access to CRS reports through House and Senate Web sites. We need your help in getting additional co-sponsors for their bill.

This Alert includes our specific asks, links to the Webmail forms of your members of Congress, and sample emails so that you can easily make contact with your senators and representatives. Thanks for your help and [please let us know](#) when you take action!

IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED IN THE SENATE

Message to the following Senate co-sponsors of S. Res. 118:

Original Sponsor:

[Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman](#) (ID-CT)

Co-Sponsors:

[Sen. John McCain](#) (R-AZ)

[Sen. Susan M. Collins](#) (R-ME)

[Sen. Russell D. Feingold](#) (D-WI)

[Sen. Tom Harkin](#) (D-IA)

[Sen. Patrick J. Leahy](#) (D-VT)

[Sen. Richard G. Lugar](#) (R-IN)

- Thank him/her for supporting this important resolution, which would provide the public with free online access to CRS reports.
- Ask him/her to contact Rules and Administration Chairman Charles Schumer to request that he explain his plan for providing the public with no-fee access to CRS reports **and** bring S. Res 118 before the Committee as soon as possible.

Message to the following senators who are on the Committee on Rules and Administration:

[Sen. Charles Schumer](#) (D-NY), Chair
[Sen. Robert Byrd](#) (D-WV)
[Sen. Christopher Dodd](#) (D-CT)
[Sen. Richard Durbin](#) (D-IL)
[Sen. Dianne Feinstein](#) (D-CA)
[Sen. Daniel Inouye](#) (D-HI)
[Sen. Patty Murray](#) (D-WA)
[Sen. E. Benjamin Nelson](#) (D-NE)
[Sen. Mark Pryor](#) (D-AR)
[Sen. Tom Udall](#) (D-NM)
[Sen. Mark Warner](#) (D-VA)

[Sen. Robert Bennett](#) (R-UT), Ranking Member
[Sen. Lamar Alexander](#) (R-TN)
[Sen. C. Saxby Chambliss](#) (R-GA)
[Sen. Thad Cochran](#) (R-MS)
[Sen. John Ensign](#) (R-NV)
[Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison](#) (R-TX)
[Sen. Mitch McConnell](#) (R-KY)
[Sen. Pat Roberts](#) (R-KS)

- Ask him/her to co-sponsor S. Res. 118.
- Ask him/her to urge Chairman Schumer to take up S. Res. 118 in the Rules Committee.

Message to [every other senator](#):

- Ask him/her to co-sponsor S. Res. 118.
- Ask him/her to contact Rules and Administration Chairman Charles Schumer to request that he explain his plan for providing the public with no-fee access to CRS reports. Ask him/her to urge Chairman Schumer to bring S. Res. 118 before the Rules Committee as soon as possible.

[Sample Message to Senators](#)

IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED IN THE HOUSE

Message to Representatives [Frank Kratovil](#) (D-MD-1) and [Leonard Lance](#) (R-NJ-7):

- Thank them for introducing H.R. 3762 to provide the public with no-fee online access to CRS reports.

Message to the following representatives who are on the Committee on House Administration:

[Rep. Robert Brady](#) (D-PA-1), Chair
[Rep. Zoe Lofgren](#) (D-CA-16), Vice-Chair
[Rep. Michael Capuano](#) (D-MA-8)
[Rep. Artur Davis](#) (D-AL-7)
[Rep. Susan Davis](#) (D-CA-53)
[Rep. Charles Gonzalez](#) (D-TX-20)

[Rep. Daniel Lungren](#) (R-CA-3), Ranking Member
[Rep. Gregg Harper](#) (R-MS-3)
[Rep. Kevin McCarthy](#) (R-CA-22)

- Ask him/her to support H.R. 3762, the *Congressional Research Service Electronic Accessibility Act of 2009* and hold a hearing on the bill.

Message to [every other House representative](#):

- Ask him/her to co-sponsor H.R. 3762.

[Sample Message to House Representatives](#)

Sample Message to Senators:

Please personalize your message by explaining why public access to CRS reports is important to you. Take a look at our [list of senators](#) to determine if your senator has a JD. If so, you can personalize your message by mentioning the law school he/she attended or any other connection you might have to him/her.

Dear Senator [last name]:

As a law librarian at [name of law library], I frequently use Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports to help my [students/faculty/patrons] conduct legal research. These well-written, tax-payer funded reports are invaluable to legal researchers. I believe that the public has a right to access these reports, which are currently only available for free to the public if a constituent requests a specific report. I urge you to co-sponsor Sen. Res. 118, which would provide the public with free access to CRS reports through the Internet.

A May 11, 2009 editorial in the *New York Times* stated that Rules and Administration Committee Chairman Charles Schumer was working on a plan to provide the public with no-fee access to CRS reports. Please contact Chairman Schumer to request that he explain his plan, and urge him to take immediate action on S. Res. 118 in the Rules Committee.

Sincerely,

[your name]

Sample Message to House Representatives:

Please personalize your message by explaining why public access to CRS reports is important to you. Take a look at our [list of House representatives](#) to determine if your representative has a JD. If so, you can personalize your message by mentioning the law school he/she attended or any other connection you might have to him/her.

Dear Representative [last name]:

As a law librarian at [name of law library], I frequently use Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports to help my [students/faculty/patrons] conduct legal research. These well-written, tax-payer funded reports are invaluable to legal researchers. I believe that the public has a right to access these reports, which are currently only available for free to the public if a constituent requests a specific report.

I urge you to co-sponsor H.R. 3762, the *Congressional Research Service Electronic Accessibility Act of 2009*, which would provide the public with free access to CRS reports through the Internet. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[your name]