

Congress Passes Electronic FOIA

On September 17, the House and Senate passed the Electronic Freedom of Information Amendments Act of 1996, H.R.3802 and S.1090. President Clinton signed H.R.3802 into law on October 2, and noted that, "[o]ur country was founded on democratic principles, and for 30 years, FOIA has supported these principles...the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996 reforges an important link between the United States Government and the American people."

The legislation updates the Freedom of Information Act to make government records available in electronic format. The legislation explicitly requires that agencies honor requests for information in electronic format although this has been an accepted practice for several years. The legislation includes a number of other provisions including:

- extends the length of time from 10 to 20 days for agencies to comply with FOIA requests;
- directs agencies to use electronic media and formats including the Internet to make information more accessible; and
- mandates better record keeping measures by agencies.

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For [more information](#) about the Electronic Freedom of Information Amendments Act, including the full text, search in [Thomas](#), The Library of Congress's Legislative Information on the Internet.

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