

THE DIGITAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, S. 994

Purpose: to establish government-wide financial data standards and increase the availability, accuracy, and usefulness of Federal spending information.

The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) will amend the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) to require full disclosure of Federal agency expenditures so taxpayers and policymakers can view the complete cycle of spending for Federal funds. It also requires the development of Government-wide data standards, takes steps to simplify financial reporting, and improves the quality of the spending data.

Below is a summary of the key components of this bipartisan legislation.

- Creates transparency for all Federal funds: The DATA Act will expand the transparency requirements of FFATA to include spending data for all Federal funds made available to or expended by a Federal agency. For the first time, taxpayers and policymakers will be able to view a complete accounting of agency spending by appropriation, federal agency, program activity, and object class in a searchable, downloadable format. The DATA Act also maintains current reporting requirements for Federal awards like contracts, grants, and loans, which will be integrated with the new information required by the DATA Act on a single, easily accessible website – USASpending.gov. This expansion of USASpending.gov will allow policymakers and the public to track Federal funds more clearly and link spending to budget priorities.
- Sets Government-wide financial data standards: The Secretary of the Treasury and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget are tasked with establishing Government-wide financial data standards. The legislation will establish a uniform framework to be used across the Federal Government, which will improve data quality and make it easier to compare Federal spending.
- Reduces recipient reporting requirements: This legislation requires the Office of Management and Budget to review the existing reporting requirements for recipients of Federal awards with the goal of simplifying reporting and reducing compliance costs. The legislation will also establish a pilot program to evaluate alternatives for consolidating financial reporting for Federal award recipients.
- Improves data quality: The Inspectors General at each agency will be required to provide reports on the quality and accuracy of the financial data provided to USASpending.gov. The Government Accountability Office will also report on the data quality and accuracy and create a Government-wide assessment of the financial data reported.
- Enhances Efforts to Detect and Prevent Waste, Fraud and Abuse: The DATA Act authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to establish a data analytics center modeled on the successful [Recovery Operations Center](#). The new center will support Inspectors General, law enforcement agencies, in criminal and other investigations, and agency

program offices in the prevention of improper payments. Assets of the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board (RATB) related to the Recovery Operations Center would transfer to the Treasury upon the expiration of the RATB's authorization.

The DATA Act is sponsored by Senators Mark R. Warner (D-VA) and Rob Portman (R-OH) and cosponsored by Senators Ayotte (R-NH), Carper (D-DE), Coburn (R-OK), Coons (D-DE), Enzi (R-WY), R. Johnson (R-WI), McCain (R-AZ), Murray (D-WA), and Whitehouse (D-RI). S.994 is a Senate companion to [legislation](#) sponsored by U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) and Ranking Member Elijah Cummings (D-MD), and cosponsored by Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO), Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-TX), Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL), Rep. John Campbell (R-CA), Rep. Michael Honda (D-CA), Rep. Michael Conaway (R-TX), Rep. Patrick Murphy (D-FL), and Rep. James Renacci (R-OH).