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AAU POSITION ON DATA ACT, H.R. 2146

The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2011 (DATA Act) establishes a Federal Accountability and Spending Transparency Board that would collect and review financial reports from entities that receive federally appropriated funds, either directly or through a sub-grant or sub-contract. The bill (H.R. 2146) also requires the creation of a new federal accountability website portal. Transparency is important, but the DATA Act imposes duplicative reporting requirements. *AAU opposes the bill in its current form, and urges that it be amended to ensure that it replaces, not duplicates, existing reporting requirements already imposed on universities by federal research agencies.*

H.R. 2146 was introduced on June 13, 2011, by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) and has 14 co-sponsors. The bill was approved by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on June 22, 2011. Senator Mark Warner (D-VA) introduced similar legislation, S. 1222, on June 16, 2011.

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Duke University
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Georgia Institute of Technology
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Iowa State University
The Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McGill University
Michigan State University
New York University
Northwestern University
The Ohio State University
The Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rice University
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Stanford University
Stony Brook University - State University
of New York
Texas A&M University
Tulane University
The University of Arizona
University at Buffalo, The State University
of New York
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
The University of Chicago
University of Colorado at Boulder
University of Florida
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
The University of Iowa
The University of Kansas
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
University of Missouri-Columbia
The University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of Southern California
The University of Texas at Austin
University of Toronto
University of Virginia
University of Washington
The University of Wisconsin-Madison
Vanderbilt University
Washington University in St. Louis
Yale University

- **Universities take seriously their responsibilities to account for and be good stewards of taxpayer funds.** Universities also recognize and appreciate the need to standardize and centralize government reporting to help ensure government transparency and accountability.
- **The DATA Act would duplicate existing reporting requirements and perpetuate many of the requirements imposed by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).** Existing laws, regulations, and agency requirements already impose a significant reporting burden for federal scientific research grants and contracts. Many of these requirements are the same as those that would be required by the DATA Act. Also, the Committee-approved bill adds many of the ARRA reporting requirements that imposed substantial paperwork and other administrative burdens on scientists and administrators. As a result, H.R. 2146 would impose duplicative requirements and substantially add to the regulatory burden, as well as compliance costs, borne by universities.
- **The DATA Act would impose significant new costs on universities' research enterprises, taking time and resources away from research and education.** Data collected from a recent survey conducted by the Federal Demonstration Partnership suggests that the paperwork and other administrative costs of the ARRA reporting requirements for 100 research institutions were over \$91 million, or about \$7,900 per research award. If these costs are extended throughout the entire federal research enterprise, they could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars each year. The time and resources needed to comply with duplicative and unnecessary requirements could otherwise be devoted to actual research and education.
- **AAU urges Congress to amend the bill to ensure that it replaces, not duplicates, existing reporting requirements.**
- **AAU endorses the [recommendations](#) of the National Governors Association (NGA) and the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) to improve the DATA Act.** These recommendations aim to advance the goals of the bill while addressing the real burdens and costs of compliance. AAU also urges that universities and other non-profit grant recipients be allowed to set aside a portion (0.5%) of grant funds to pay for the additional administrative expenses associated with the new reporting requirements. NGA and NASCIO recommend such a set-aside for state and local governments.

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