

## 3/21/2005 Moran Sponsors Legislation to Strengthen the Freedom of Information Act

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Legislation to Hold Government Agencies Accountable

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today became the first sponsor of H.R. 867, the Open Government Act. The legislation is designed to hold federal agencies more accountable to the media and members of the public who have filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Currently, FOIA requests must be responded to within 20 days by agencies. The Open Government Act reduces this time to 10 days and imposes consequences for agencies that fail to meet the 10-day time limit.

"There is no question but that government must be open and accountable to the people it serves," Moran said. "The Freedom of Information Act is an essential part of providing a necessary check and balance on the federal government. For too long, some federal agencies have felt that they can be slow in responding to Freedom of Information Act requests. This legislation will promote accountability, accessibility and openness in government."

The Open Government Act also broadens the definition of "news media" to include all types of news media, including smaller, non-traditional outlets. In addition, the legislation strengthens FOIA by closing loopholes, tightening time limits for government agencies and forcing agencies to respond to FOIA requests in a timely manner.

"We want to thank Congressman Jerry Moran for stepping forward and leading the way on this important open government issue," Doug Anstaett, executive director of the Kansas Press Association, said.

Moran sponsored the legislation after meeting with representatives of the Kansas Press Association. Over 30 national organizations from across the political spectrum support the Open Government Act, including the conservative Heritage Foundation, the American Library Association and the American Civil Liberties Union.

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