

HR 3548

Plain Language in Government Communications Act of 2008

Congress: 110 (2007–2009, Ended)

Chamber: House

Policy Area: Government Operations and Politics

Introduced: Sep 17, 2007

Current Status: Read twice. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 929.

Latest Action: Read twice. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 929. (Aug 1, 2008)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-bill/3548>

Sponsor

Name: Rep. Braley, Bruce L. [D-IA-1]

Party: Democratic • **State:** IA • **Chamber:** House

Cosponsors (32 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Rep. Akin, W. Todd [R-MO-2]	R · MO		Sep 17, 2007
Rep. Boyda, Nancy E. [D-KS-2]	D · KS		Sep 17, 2007
Rep. Burton, Dan [R-IN-5]	R · IN		Sep 17, 2007
Rep. McGovern, James P. [D-MA-3]	D · MA		Sep 17, 2007
Rep. Cummings, Elijah E. [D-MD-7]	D · MD		Sep 26, 2007
Rep. Reyes, Silvestre [D-TX-16]	D · TX		Sep 26, 2007
Rep. Gordon, Bart [D-TN-6]	D · TN		Oct 15, 2007
Rep. Hare, Phil [D-IL-17]	D · IL		Oct 15, 2007
Rep. Johnson, Henry C. "Hank," Jr. [D-GA-4]	D · GA		Oct 16, 2007
Rep. Welch, Peter [D-VT-At Large]	D · VT		Oct 16, 2007
Rep. Altmire, Jason [D-PA-4]	D · PA		Oct 17, 2007
Rep. Giffords, Gabrielle [D-AZ-8]	D · AZ		Oct 22, 2007
Rep. Emanuel, Rahm [D-IL-5]	D · IL		Oct 23, 2007
Rep. Hill, Baron P. [D-IN-9]	D · IN		Oct 23, 2007
Rep. Mahoney, Tim [D-FL-16]	D · FL		Oct 23, 2007
Rep. Kagen, Steve [D-WI-8]	D · WI		Oct 24, 2007
Rep. Shea-Porter, Carol [D-NH-1]	D · NH		Oct 24, 2007
Rep. Blumenauer, Earl [D-OR-3]	D · OR		Oct 29, 2007
Rep. Davis, Susan A. [D-CA-53]	D · CA		Oct 30, 2007
Rep. Moran, James P. [D-VA-8]	D · VA		Oct 30, 2007
Rep. Space, Zachary T. [D-OH-18]	D · OH		Oct 30, 2007
Rep. Boswell, Leonard L. [D-IA-3]	D · IA		Oct 31, 2007
Rep. Davis, Danny K. [D-IL-7]	D · IL		Nov 5, 2007
Rep. Sutton, Betty [D-OH-13]	D · OH		Nov 5, 2007
Rep. Lantos, Tom [D-CA-12]	D · CA		Nov 6, 2007
Rep. Barrow, John [D-GA-12]	D · GA		Nov 7, 2007
Rep. Udall, Mark [D-CO-2]	D · CO		Nov 8, 2007
Rep. Towns, Edolphus [D-NY-10]	D · NY		Nov 15, 2007
Rep. Bean, Melissa L. [D-IL-8]	D · IL		Dec 17, 2007
Rep. Van Hollen, Chris [D-MD-8]	D · MD		Dec 19, 2007
Rep. Hodes, Paul W. [D-NH-2]	D · NH		Jan 28, 2008
Rep. Lewis, John [D-GA-5]	D · GA		Feb 6, 2008

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Oversight and Government Reform Committee	House	Reported by	Jan 30, 2008

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Government Operations and Politics

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
110 S 2291	Related bill	Jul 10, 2008: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 869.

Summary (as of Apr 14, 2008)

Plain Language in Government Communications Act of 2008 - (Sec. 4) Requires each executive agency, within one year, to: (1) use plain language in any covered document issued or substantially revised after the date of the enactment of this Act; and (2) use the English language in covered documents when appropriate. Authorizes agencies to: (1) use plain language in any revision of a covered document issued on or before such date; and (2) follow the guidance of the Plain English Handbook published by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the Federal Plain Language Guidelines, or their own plain language guidance as long as it is consistent with such Handbook, Guidelines, and the Comptroller General's recommendations.

Declares that nothing in this Act shall be construed to: (1) prohibit the use of a language other than English; (2) limit the preservation or use of Native Alaskan or Native American languages; (3) disparage any language or discourage any person from learning or using a language; (4) affect protections regarding language access; or (5) be inconsistent with the Constitution.

Defines "covered document" to include: (1) any document relevant to obtaining a benefit or service or filing taxes; and (2) a letter, publication, form, notice, or instruction, in paper or electronic form, but not a regulation.

Requires agencies to use plain language in any collection of information.

Requires the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), acting through the Plain Language Action and Information Network, and the SEC to report to specified congressional committees on whether the Comptroller General's recommendations about plain language guidelines and best practices have been incorporated into the Federal Plain Language Guidelines and the Plain English Handbook and, if not, why.

(Sec. 5) Requires each agency head to report to specified congressional committees on how it intends to: (1) communicate the requirements of this Act to employees; (2) train employees to write in plain language; (3) meet the one year deadline; (4) ensure ongoing compliance with this Act; (5) designate a senior official to be responsible for implementing this Act; and (6) use plain language in promulgated regulations. Requires agency heads to report on efforts to meet such objectives and on compliance with this Act.

Requires the Comptroller General to evaluate existing guidance for agencies on writing in plain language and report to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and specified congressional committees on plain language guidelines and best practices.

Actions Timeline

- **Aug 1, 2008:** Read twice. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 929.
- **Apr 15, 2008:** Received in the Senate.
- **Apr 14, 2008:** Mr. Braley (IA) moved to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.
- **Apr 14, 2008:** Considered under suspension of the rules. (consideration: CR H2237-2239)
- **Apr 14, 2008:** DEBATE - The House proceeded with forty minutes of debate on H.R. 3548.
- **Apr 14, 2008:** At the conclusion of debate, the Yeas and Nays were demanded and ordered. Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8, rule XX, the Chair announced that further proceedings on the motion would be postponed.
- **Apr 14, 2008:** Considered as unfinished business. (consideration: CR H2245)
- **Apr 14, 2008:** Passed/agreed to in House: On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 376 - 1 (Roll no. 185).(text: CR H2237)
- **Apr 14, 2008:** Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
- **Apr 14, 2008:** On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 376 - 1 (Roll no. 185). (text: CR H2237)
- **Apr 10, 2008:** Reported (Amended) by the Committee on Oversight and Government. H. Rept. 110-580.
- **Apr 10, 2008:** Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 358.
- **Mar 13, 2008:** Committee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
- **Mar 13, 2008:** Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by Voice Vote.
- **Jan 29, 2008:** Subcommittee Consideration and Mark-up Session Held.
- **Jan 29, 2008:** Forwarded by Subcommittee to Full Committee by Voice Vote .
- **Oct 1, 2007:** Referred to the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives.
- **Sep 17, 2007:** Introduced in House
- **Sep 17, 2007:** Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

LegiList

CONGRESS, MADE CLEAR.

Search Every Federal Bill, Law, and Vote

LegiList is the fastest way to research Congress. Track any bill from introduction to enactment, see how every legislator voted, follow committee activity, and read the full text of every bill — all in one place, always up to date.

legilist.com

Free Course: Learn How Congress Actually Works

LegiList Learn is a free, self-paced course that walks through the entire legislative process — from drafting a bill to a presidential signature. Seven modules, plain language, no politics. Earn a certificate when you finish.

legilist.com/learn

Developer API: Build Apps on Legislative Data

The LegiList API gives developers direct access to bills, votes, legislators, committees, and more. Start free with 1,000 requests per day — no credit card required. Upgrade to Pro when you need to scale.

legilist.com/api

Public data belongs to the public. — legilist.com