

Chairman Henry A. Waxman and 18 other committee chairs introduced legislation to strengthen the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and restore GAO's authority to pursue litigation if documents are improperly withheld from the agency.

"GAO needs unfettered access to federal agencies to help Congress identify waste, fraud, and abuse in federal programs," said Chairman Waxman. "This bill says that federal agencies and the White House can't withhold records that GAO is entitled to review."

One key provision of the Government Accountability Office Improvement Act of 2008 (H.R. 6388) repudiates the district court decision in *Walker v. Cheney* and reaffirms GAO's authority to go to court when agencies or the White House refuse to provide access to records.

Other provisions of this bill give GAO authority to interview federal employees and administer oaths. The bill also affirms GAO's right to obtain records from three agencies that have sometimes thwarted GAO oversight by denying access to documents: the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Federal Trade Commission.

Finally, the bill creates a reporting mechanism so that Congress will be informed when federal agencies do not cooperate with GAO.

List of original cosponsors for the Government Accountability Office Improvement Act of 2008:

Mr. Dingell
Mr. Conyers
Mr. Obey
Mr. Rangel
Mr. George Miller of California
Mr. Oberstar
Mr. Rahall
Mr. Skelton
Mr. Frank
Mr. Berman
Mr. Spratt

Mr. Gordon
Ms. Slaughter
Mr. Filner
Mr. Thompson of Mississippi
Ms. Velazquez
Mr. Reyes
Mr. Brady of Pennsylvania

Documents and Links

- [Text of the Government Accountability Office Improvement Act of 2008](#)
- [Chairman Waxman's Statement](#)