

GAO

Fact Sheet for the Ranking Minority
Member, Committee on Government
Operations, House of Representatives

August 1992

CONGRESSIONAL REPORTS

OMB and Other Agency Reporting Requirements



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United States
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Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division

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August 31, 1992

The Honorable Frank Horton
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Government Operations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Horton:

This fact sheet responds to your concern about reporting requirements imposed on departments and agencies by Congress. In discussions with the Committee, we agreed to limit our work to identifying the number of statutorily required reports the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and other federal agencies provided to the House Government Operations Committee and/or Congress as a whole during the 101st and 102nd Congresses (as of March 11, 1992) under management-oriented legislation reported out by the Committee.

RESULTS IN BRIEF

The management-oriented reporting requirements and the reports submitted to the Government Operations Committee to satisfy those requirements are numerous. During the 101st Congress, federal departments and agencies had over 100 reporting requirements specifically identified for the Committee and submitted over 800 reports to satisfy those requirements. OMB had 8 reporting requirements and submitted 10 reports to the House Government Operations Committee during the 101st Congress. The number of OMB reports identified as being submitted to the Committee increased significantly during the 102nd Congress, though, because of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. As of March 11, 1992, OMB had sent 38 reports to the Committee in compliance with the act.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objective was to identify the number of reporting requirements and reports submitted to the Committee and to Congress as a whole under management-oriented legislation reported out by the House Government Operations Committee during the 101st and 102nd Congresses. Management-oriented legislation is any legislation the Government Operations

Committee has jurisdiction over dealing with the overall economy and efficiency of government operations and activities. To meet this objective, we did a literature search; reviewed prior reports by GAO and other agencies; and interviewed officials from OMB, the Office of the Clerk of the House, House Information Systems, the General Services Administration, and the Government Operations Committee.

We also obtained access to and analyzed the Reports Due to Congress Databases maintained for the Clerk of the House by House Information Systems (HIS). The Reports Due to Congress Databases have been maintained for each Congress from the 98th Congress to the present 102nd Congress. These databases show two types of entries--requirements and reports. Reports may be received from any branch of the federal government or from federally chartered corporations. Each report received in the Office of the Clerk of the House is entered into the system and matched with its appropriate reporting requirement and the committee(s) to which the report is forwarded. We did not validate the contents of the databases.

We did our analysis of the HIS databases as of March 11, 1992. We discussed the results of our work with appropriate OMB officials, and their comments have been incorporated where appropriate. We did our work from November 1991 through May 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
AND RESULTING REPORTS

According to the databases for the 101st and 102nd Congresses, the Committee's legislation generated a large volume of reports from OMB and other federal agencies, as shown in table 1.1.

Table 1: OMB and Other Agency Management-Oriented Reporting Requirements to the House Government Operations Committee and Reports Received

OMB reports to House Government Operations Committee	101st	102nd
Requirements	8	8
Reports received	10	52
OMB reports to Congress as a whole		
Requirements	6	12
Reports received	3	2
OMB reports to other Committees		
Requirements	4	5
Reports received	46	50
Other agency reports to House Government Operations Committee		
Requirements	113	98
Reports received	807	615

Requirements do not match the number of communications received because one requirement may require many communications. For example, as shown in appendix I, 38 of the 52 reports submitted by OMB by March 11, 1992, were done in response to directives in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. Similarly, of the 46 reports OMB sent to committees other than the Government Operations Committee during the 101st Congress, 38 reports were sent to the other committees as status reports, many on a monthly basis, on technical aspects of the budget process. There are also cases where a one-time requirement will result in one report that is not of a recurring nature.

More generally, according to the databases, Congress imposes about 300 new requirements on federal agencies each year. As of March 1992, there were 3,719 requirements and 3,331 communications in the 102nd Congress database.

CONCERN OVER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Both Congress and the executive branch have expressed concern over the magnitude and growth of reporting requirements. The basic concern has been that some requirements result in reports that may be duplicative, unnecessarily burdensome to produce, or, in some instances, not very useful. If reporting requirements that are no longer needed were modified or eliminated, resources could be freed for other program activities, thereby improving productivity. Because of these concerns, GAO has been asked to study the magnitude of recurring congressional reporting requirements. A list of related GAO products on congressional reporting requirements is included at the end of this fact sheet. Our last report on this issue was Congressional Reports: Efforts to Eliminate or Modify Reporting Requirements Need to Be Improved (GAO/AFMD-88-4, April 19, 1988). In that report we reviewed the procedures used to compile and present a legislative proposal for modifying or eliminating 240 congressional reporting requirements. The resulting Congressional Reports Elimination Act of 1986 changed or rescinded 23, or less than 10 percent, of these requirements. The report contained recommendations for how the executive branch and Congress could improve future efforts to eliminate or modify congressional reporting requirements.

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As arranged with the Committee, we are sending copies of this fact sheet to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and other interested parties. If you need additional information about this fact sheet, please call me on 275-8676. Major contributors to this fact sheet are listed in appendix III.

Sincerely yours,



L. Nye Stevens
Director, Government Business
Operations and Information Issues

LEGAL CITATIONS FOR OMB REPORTS
TO THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
FOR THE 102ND CONGRESS

Number of reports
 received as of
March 11, 1992

Legal citations

38	Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990, Public Law 101-508, Sec. 13101(a), 104 Stat. 1388-578
2	Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, Public Law 96-511, Sec. 2 94 Stat. 2823, codified at 44 U.S.C. 3514(a), (Responsiveness to the Congress on federal information management activities)
2	Public Law 97-258, 96 Stat. 963, codified at 31 U.S.C. 3524(b), (Auditing expenditures without vouchers)
2	Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, Public Law 101-410, § § 4 and 6, 104 Stat. 891-892
1	Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, Public Law 96-511, 94 Stat. 2815, codified at 44 U.S.C. 3504, (Federal statistical activities, reduction of the burden of paperwork, information collection requests, use of automated data processing, telecommunications, and privacy of records)
1	Public Law 97-258, codified at 31 U.S.C. 716(d)(1)(c), (Availability of information to GAO and inspection of records)
1	Single Audit Act of 1984, Public Law 98-502, Sec. 2(a) 98 Stat. 2334, codified at 31 U.S.C. 7507(b)

- 1 Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990,
Public Law 101-576, Sec. 301, 104 Stat.
2848, codified at 31 U.S.C. 3512(A)(4
and 5)
- 1 Administrative Procedures Act Amendment,
Public Law 90-570, Sec. 1802, 100 Stat.
3207-48, codified at 5 U.S.C. 552(e),
(Public information, rules, opinions,
orders, records, and proceedings)
- 0 Commission on Federal Paperwork, Public
Law 93-556, Sec. 3(d), 88 Stat. 1790,
(Paperwork reduction actions and
activities)
- 0 Housing and Community Development
Amendments of 1978, Public Law 95-557,
Sec. 905(c) 93 Stat. 1121, 92 Stat.
2127, codified at 42 U.S.C. 3541 (c),
(Information management)
- 0 Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, Public
Law 96-511, Sec. 2 94 Stat. 2822,
codified at 44 U.S.C. 3513, (Review at
least every 3 years each agency's
information management activities)
- 0 Public Law 97-258, 96 Stat. 916,
codified at 31 U.S.C. 1113(e)(3),
(Status of information systems)
- 3 Reports on draft legislation sent to the
House Government Operations Committee
without a statutory mandate

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS FACT SHEET

GENERAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

J. Christopher Mihm, Assistant Director,
Government Business Operations Issues
Patrick R. Mullen, Evaluator-in-Charge
Jacqueline E. Matthews, Senior Evaluator
Maria Z. Oliver, Evaluator

RELATED GAO PRODUCTS

Congressional Reports: Efforts to Eliminate or Modify Reporting Requirements Need to Be Improved (GAO/AFMD-88-4, April 19, 1988).

Bills That Would Eliminate or Modify Certain Requirements for Agency Reports to the Congress (Testimony by Charles A. Bowsher, June 4, 1986).

Legislative Oversight: Congressional Requests for Information on Defense Activities (GAO/NSIAD-86-65BR, Feb. 14, 1986).

Recurring Reports to the Congress: Efforts to Eliminate or Modify Certain Reporting Requirements (GAO/AFMD-85-49, April 1, 1985).

Requirements for Recurring Reports to the Congress (GAO/AFMD-85-4, 1985).

Requirements for Recurring Reports to the Congress (PAD-82-28, 1982).

A Systematic Management Approach is Needed for Congressional Reporting Requirements (PAD-82-12, Nov. 25, 1981).

Progress in Improving Program and Budget Information for Congressional Use (PAD-81-88, Sept. 1, 1981).

Observations on Oversight Reform (PAD-81-17, 1981).

Using Congressional Reporting Requirements in the Budget Process (PAD-81-24, Dec. 18, 1980).

Requirements for Recurring Reports to the Congress (PAD-80-49, Nov., 1980).

Analysis of Requirements for Recurring Reports to the Congress (PAD-80-72, April 18, 1980).

Statistics on Congressional Reporting Requirements (PAD-78-76, July 25, 1978).

Requirements for Recurring Reports to the Congress (PAD-77-61, 1977).

Usefulness to the Congress of Reports Submitted by the Executive Branch (B-115398, Oct. 26, 1973).

(243033)

Ordering Information

The first copy of each GAO report and testimony is free. Additional copies are \$2 each. Orders should be sent to the following address, accompanied by a check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents, when necessary. Orders for 100 or more copies to be mailed to a single address are discounted 25 percent.

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