

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7934

To amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of settlement agreements, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 16, 2026

Mr. PALMER (for himself and Mr. MFUME) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

A BILL

To amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of settlement agreements, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Settlement Agreement
5 Information Database Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. INFORMATION REGARDING SETTLEMENT AGREE-**
7 **MENTS ENTERED INTO BY AGENCIES.**

8 (a) REQUIREMENTS FOR SETTLEMENT AGREE-
9 MENTS.—Subchapter I of chapter 3 of title 5, United

1 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
2 lowing:

3 **“§ 307. Information regarding settlement agreements**

4 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 “(1) AGENCY.—The term ‘agency’ has the
6 meaning given the term in section 3502 of title 44.

7 “(2) COVERED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.—

8 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘covered set-
9 tlement agreement’ means a settlement agree-
10 ment or deferred prosecution agreement that
11 meets 1 or more of the following requirements:

12 “(i) Requires not less than
13 \$10,000,000 in total explicitly obligated
14 payments of a settling party on the date
15 on which the settlement agreement is exe-
16 cuted.

17 “(ii) Involves the appointment of a
18 special master or monitor.

19 “(iii) Involves a party that is a State,
20 metropolitan city, local government, coun-
21 ty, or other unit of government that is not
22 the Federal Government.

23 “(iv) Is designated as a covered settle-
24 ment agreement by the Director as a result
25 of meeting additional criteria determined

1 by the Director as described in subsection
2 (b)(2)(C).

3 “(B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term ‘covered
4 settlement agreement’ does not include a settle-
5 ment agreement that relates to any of the fol-
6 lowing:

7 “(i) The United States Trustee Pro-
8 gram.

9 “(ii) A Federal employee personnel
10 action, including an action before the
11 Equal Employment Opportunity Commis-
12 sion, the Office of Special Counsel, or the
13 Merit Systems Protection Board, or any
14 other internal personnel-related matter.

15 “(iii) A non-prosecution agreement or
16 plea bargain.

17 “(iv) The Internal Revenue Code of
18 1986.

19 “(v) Any matter that may be brought
20 as an action pursuant to chapter 46 of title
21 18.

22 “(3) DIRECTOR.—The term ‘Director’ means
23 the Director of the Office of Management and Budg-
24 et.

1 “(4) LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘local
2 government’ has the meaning given the term in sec-
3 tion 6501 of title 31.

4 “(5) ORIGINATING AGENCY.—The term ‘origi-
5 nating agency’ means an agency on behalf of which
6 or at the request of which another agency executes
7 a settlement agreement.

8 “(6) SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.—The term
9 ‘settlement agreement’ means an agreement (includ-
10 ing a consent decree) that—

11 “(A) is entered into by an agency; and

12 “(B) resolves an alleged violation of Fed-
13 eral, civil, or criminal law.

14 “(7) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means each of
15 the several States, the District of Columbia, each
16 territory or possession of the United States, and
17 each federally recognized Indian Tribe.

18 “(b) COVERED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT INFORMA-
19 TION DATABASE.—

20 “(1) AGENCY REQUIREMENT.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years
22 after the date of the enactment of this section,
23 the head of each agency that has entered into
24 a covered settlement agreement shall establish
25 and maintain a public online database that,

1 subject to subparagraph (B), contains the fol-
2 lowing information and documents to the extent
3 practicable:

4 “(i) A list (in a categorized and
5 searchable format) that includes each cov-
6 ered settlement agreement entered into by
7 such agency and publishes with respect to
8 each such covered settlement agreement
9 the following:

10 “(I) Whether the covered settle-
11 ment agreement resolves a civil or
12 criminal claim or both.

13 “(II) The date on which each
14 party settling a claim under the cov-
15 ered settlement agreement executes
16 such covered settlement agreement.

17 “(III) Any specific statutory pro-
18 vision alleged to have been violated, as
19 may be set forth in any corresponding
20 public letter or complaint.

21 “(IV) Any expressly denominated
22 amount of fees and other expenses of
23 attorneys provided by or to the United
24 States.

1 “(V) The amount, if any, each
2 party settling a claim under the cov-
3 ered settlement agreement is explicitly
4 obligated to pay as set forth in such
5 covered settlement agreement.

6 “(VI) The amount, if any, each
7 party settling a claim under the cov-
8 ered settlement agreement is obligated
9 to pay as expressly specified under the
10 covered settlement agreement as a
11 civil or criminal penalty or fine.

12 “(VII) Any payment made under
13 the covered settlement agreement, in-
14 cluding the amount of any payment
15 made to or by the Federal Govern-
16 ment.

17 “(VIII) The projected duration of
18 the covered settlement agreement, if
19 available.

20 “(IX) A list of any State, local
21 government, county, or any other unit
22 of government that is directly identi-
23 fied by the substantive terms of the
24 covered settlement agreement.

1 “(ii) A copy of each such covered set-
2 tlement agreement.

3 “(B) EXEMPTIONS.—The requirement to
4 publish a copy of or any other information with
5 respect to a covered settlement agreement pur-
6 suant to subparagraph (A) does not apply to
7 the extent such copy (or portion thereof) or in-
8 formation—

9 “(i) is subject to a confidentiality pro-
10 vision or court order that prohibits the dis-
11 closure of such copy (or portion) or infor-
12 mation; or

13 “(ii) would be subject to withholding
14 from public disclosure under section 552.

15 “(2) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 1 year after
16 the date of the enactment of this section, the Direc-
17 tor, in coordination with the Attorney General, shall
18 issue, and periodically update as necessary there-
19 after, guidance for the head of each agency to imple-
20 ment paragraph (1) that includes the following:

21 “(A) Specific dates by which such head
22 shall publish information necessary to maintain
23 the database of such agency pursuant to para-
24 graph (1)(A), which shall be not less frequently
25 than annually.

1 “(B) Data standards, including common
2 data elements and a common, nonproprietary,
3 searchable, machine-readable, and platform-
4 independent format, for the publication of infor-
5 mation pursuant to paragraph (1)(A).

6 “(C) Additional criteria that such head
7 shall use to determine if a settlement agreement
8 is likely to require significant compliance costs
9 such that such head shall designate such settle-
10 ment agreement as a covered settlement agree-
11 ment.

12 “(D) A requirement that such head shall
13 use a uniform resource locator for the establish-
14 ment of the database of such agency pursuant
15 to paragraph (1)(A) that—

16 “(i) is—

17 “(I) in a consistent format across
18 agencies; and

19 “(II) descriptive, memorable, and
20 pronounceable; and

21 “(ii) may be ‘agencyname.gov/settle-
22 ments’.

23 “(E) A process that such head may use to
24 request certification from the Director that a
25 database of such agency that exists on the date

1 of the enactment of this section complies with
2 this subsection.

3 “(F) A process for requiring the head of
4 not less than 1 agency to publish a covered set-
5 tlement agreement on a database required by
6 paragraph (1)(A) if—

7 “(i) multiple agencies are a party to
8 such covered settlement agreement; or

9 “(ii) such head enters into an addi-
10 tional covered settlement agreement at the
11 request of or on behalf of an originating
12 agency.

13 “(3) NON-DISCLOSURE TRANSPARENCY.—

14 “(A) REPORT ON NON-DISCLOSURE.—Not
15 later than 2 years after the date of the enact-
16 ment of this section, and not less frequently
17 than annually thereafter, the head of each
18 agency that establishes and maintains a data-
19 base pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) shall submit
20 to Congress and make publicly available on the
21 website of such agency a report on covered set-
22 tlement agreements that the agency does not
23 publicly disclose in the database for the covered
24 settlements published in the previous year.

1 “(B) REPORT CONTENTS.—The report de-
2 scribed in subparagraph (A) shall include—

3 “(i) the number of covered settlement
4 agreements that were fully exempted under
5 paragraph (1)(B);

6 “(ii) for each covered settlement
7 agreement fully exempted under paragraph
8 (1)(B), the specific exemption under that
9 paragraph that applies; and

10 “(iii) in the case of a full exemption
11 under paragraph (1)(B)(ii), the specific ex-
12 emptions under section 552 that apply.”.

13 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
14 for subchapter I of chapter 3 of title 5, United States
15 Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new
16 item:

 “307. Information regarding settlement agreements.”.

17 (c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any information published
19 on a database established and maintained pursuant
20 to section 307(b)(1)(A) of title 5, United States
21 Code, as added by subsection (a), shall not affect the
22 terms of a settlement agreement or the interpreta-
23 tion or application of the settlement agreement.

24 (2) LEGAL RIGHTS.—The inclusion or omission
25 of information or documents in a database estab-

lished and maintained pursuant to section 307(b)(1)(A) of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall not be construed as creating any legal right or opportunity for judicial review.

(3) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.—Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this Act, shall be construed to require the disclosure of information or records that the head of an agency may withhold from public disclosure under section 552 of title 5, United States Code.

(4) CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this Act, shall be construed to require the disclosure of classified information.

(d) APPLICABILITY.—This Act, and the amendments made by this Act, shall apply with respect to—

(1) any covered settlement agreement (as defined in section 307(a) of title 5, United States Code, as added by subsection (a)) entered into on or after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) to the extent practicable, any such covered settlement agreement that—

(A) was entered into on or after January 1, 2015; and

1 (B) remains in effect on or after the date
2 of the enactment of this Act.

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