



## **The Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations**

The Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) are among the most essential documents of the United States Executive Branch. The Federal Register is the daily legal newspaper of the federal government; the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the departments and agencies. In one of the federal government's most successful agency partnerships, the National Archives and Records Administration shares responsibility with the Government Printing Office of the production, printing and distribution of the Federal Register and CFR.

Since its inception in 1936, the Federal Register has always been accompanied by an index, which assists users in locating the most relevant materials. The CFR is also accompanied by an index, which is organized by detailed subjects with references to CFR parts. Members of the public, librarians, researchers, students, attorneys, and small business owners use the indexes to quickly locate relevant information.

On March 12, 2014, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee reported out the *Federal Register Modernization Act* (H.R. 4195) by voice vote. The bill had been introduced only the night before, with little transparency. H.R. 4195 removes the statutory requirement to print the Federal Register and CFR and eliminates all requirements to produce indexes for these materials. By making it harder for citizens to find their government's regulations, the proposed legislation undermines their right to be informed.

**The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) urges members of Congress to oppose H.R. 4195 because:**

- **Members of the public must be able to access the Federal Register and CFR in print.** A recent survey by AALL revealed that members of the public, librarians, researchers, students, attorneys, and small business owners continue to rely on the print. The Federal Register and CFR are on GPO's Essential Titles List, which recognizes the need for specific titles to remain available through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) in paper or other tangible format at the nation's 1,200 FDLP libraries.
- **Eliminating the indexes to the Federal Register and CFR would remove essential finding aides.** Given the amount of content in the *Federal Register* and CFR, indexes are necessary to provide meaningful access. Indexes are especially important for users who may not know exactly what they are looking for. Full text searching does not replace indexing.
- **H.R. 4195 would result in less transparency.** The Pew Research Center estimates that 15 percent of American adults do not use the Internet. Even those with Internet access are often not well versed in conducting an effective search. Eliminating the print Federal Register and CFR and their accompanying indexes would effectively cut off access to these essential legal resources for millions of Americans.