

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 to improve the orderly transfer of the executive power during Presidential transitions.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. CARPER, and Ms. HASSAN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Presidential Transition Act of 1963 to improve the orderly transfer of the executive power during Presidential transitions.

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 “Presidential Transition  
5 Enhancement Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION ENHANCEMENTS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3 of the Presidential  
8 Transition Act of 1963 (3 U.S.C. 102 note) is amended—

9 (1) in subsection (a)—

1           (A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1),  
2           by striking “upon request,” and all that follows  
3           through “including” and inserting “upon re-  
4           quest, to each President-elect, each Vice-Presi-  
5           dent-elect, and, for up to 60 days after the date  
6           of the inauguration of the President-elect and  
7           Vice-President-elect, each President and Vice  
8           President, for use in connection with the prep-  
9           arations for the assumption of official duties as  
10          President or Vice President necessary services  
11          and facilities, including”; and

12          (B) in paragraph (2)—

13               (i) by inserting “, or an employee of  
14               a committee of either House of Congress,  
15               a joint committee of the Congress, or an  
16               individual Member of Congress,” after  
17               “any branch of the Government”; and

18               (ii) by inserting “, or in the case of an  
19               employee in a position in the legislative  
20               branch, with the consent of the supervising  
21               Member of Congress” after “with the con-  
22               sent of the head of the agency”;

23          (2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the  
24          following:

1       “(b) The Administrator shall expend funds for the  
2 provision of services and facilities under this section—

3               “(1) in connection with any obligation incurred  
4 by the President-elect or Vice-President-elect, or  
5 after the inauguration of the President-elect as  
6 President and the inauguration of the Vice-Presi-  
7 dent-elect as Vice President incurred by the Presi-  
8 dent or Vice President, during the period—

9               “(A) beginning on the day after the date  
10 of the general elections held to determine the  
11 electors of the President and Vice President  
12 under section 1 or 2 of title 3, United States  
13 Code; and

14               “(B) ending on the date that is 60 days  
15 after the date of such inauguration; and

16               “(2) without regard to whether the President-  
17 elect, Vice-President-elect, President, or Vice Presi-  
18 dent submits to the Administrator a request for pay-  
19 ment regarding services or facilities before the end  
20 of such period.”;

21               (3) in subsection (h)(2)(B)(ii), by striking  
22 “computers” and inserting “information tech-  
23 nology”; and

24               (4) By adding at the end the following:

25               “(i) MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING.—

1           “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September  
2           1 of a year during which a Presidential election oc-  
3           curs, the Administrator shall, to the maximum ex-  
4           tent practicable, enter into a memorandum of under-  
5           standing with each eligible candidate, which shall in-  
6           clude, at a minimum, the conditions for the adminis-  
7           trative support services and facilities described in  
8           subsection (a).

9           “(2) EXISTING RESOURCES.—To the maximum  
10          extent practicable, a memorandum of understanding  
11          entered into under paragraph (1) shall be based on  
12          memorandums of understanding relating to previous  
13          Presidential transitions.

14          “(3) TRANSITION REPRESENTATIVE.—

15                 “(A) DESIGNATION OF REPRESENTATIVE  
16                 FOR INQUIRIES.—Each memorandum of under-  
17                 standing entered into under this subsection  
18                 shall designate a representative of the eligible  
19                 candidate to whom the Administrator shall di-  
20                 rect any inquiries or legal instruments regard-  
21                 ing the records of the eligible candidate that are  
22                 in the custody of the Administrator.

23                 “(B) CHANGE IN TRANSITION REPRESENT-  
24                 ATIVE.—The designation of a new individual as  
25                 the transition representative of an eligible can-

1 didate shall not require the execution of a new  
2 memorandum of understanding under this sub-  
3 section.

4 “(C) TERMINATION OF DESIGNATION.—  
5 The designation of a transition representative  
6 under a memorandum of understanding shall  
7 terminate—

8 “(i) not later than September 30 of  
9 the year during which the inauguration of  
10 the President-elect as President and the  
11 inauguration of the Vice-President-elect as  
12 Vice President occurs; or

13 “(ii) before the date described in  
14 clause (i), upon request of the President-  
15 elect or the Vice-President-elect or, after  
16 such inauguration, upon request of the  
17 President or the Vice President.

18 “(4) AMENDMENTS.—Any amendment to a  
19 memorandum of understanding entered into under  
20 this subsection shall be agreed to in writing.

21 “(5) PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF DEVIATION.—  
22 Each party to a memorandum of understanding en-  
23 tered into under this subsection shall provide written  
24 notice, except to the extent prohibited under another  
25 provision of law, not later than 3 days before taking

1 any action that deviates from the terms and condi-  
2 tions agreed to in the memorandum of under-  
3 standing.

4 “(6) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term  
5 ‘eligible candidate’ has the meaning given that term  
6 in subsection (h)(4).”.

7 (b) AGENCY TRANSITIONS.—Section 4 of the Presi-  
8 dential Transition Act of 1963 (3 U.S.C. 102 note) is  
9 amended—

10 (1) in subsection (a)—

11 (A) in paragraph (3), by striking “and” at  
12 the end;

13 (B) by redesignating paragraph (4) as  
14 paragraph (5); and

15 (C) by inserting after paragraph (3) the  
16 following:

17 “(4) the term ‘nonpublic information’—

18 “(A) means information from the Federal  
19 Government that a member of a transition team  
20 obtains as part of the employment of the mem-  
21 ber that such member knows or reasonably  
22 should know has not been made available to the  
23 general public; and

1           “(B) includes information that a member  
2 of the transition team knows or reasonably  
3 should know—

4                   “(i) is exempt from disclosure under  
5 section 552 of title 5, United States Code,  
6 or otherwise protected from disclosure by  
7 law; and

8                   “(ii) is not authorized by the appro-  
9 priate government agency or officials to be  
10 released to the public; and”;

11           (2) in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of subsection  
12 (e)(3), by inserting “serving in a career position”  
13 after “senior representative”;

14           (3) by striking subsection (f)(2) and inserting  
15 the following:

16                   “(2) ACTING OFFICERS.—Not later than Sep-  
17 tember 15 of a year during which a Presidential  
18 election occurs, and in accordance with subchapter  
19 III of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, the  
20 head of each agency shall ensure that a succession  
21 plan is in place for each senior noncareer position in  
22 the agency.”; and

23           (4) in subsection (g)—

24                   (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “Novem-  
25 ber 1” and inserting “October 1”; and

1 (B) by adding at the end the following:

2 “(3) ETHICS PLAN.—

3 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Each memorandum of  
4 understanding under paragraph (1) shall in-  
5 clude an agreement that the eligible candidate  
6 will implement and enforce an ethics plan to  
7 guide the conduct of the transition beginning on  
8 the date on which the eligible candidate be-  
9 comes the President-elect.

10 “(B) CONTENTS.—The ethics plan shall  
11 include, at a minimum—

12 “(i) a description of the ethics re-  
13 quirements that will apply to all members  
14 of the transition team, including any spe-  
15 cific requirement for transition team mem-  
16 bers who will have access to nonpublic or  
17 classified information;

18 “(ii) a description of how the transi-  
19 tion team will—

20 “(I) address the role on the tran-  
21 sition team of—

22 “(aa) lobbyists registered  
23 under the Lobbying Disclosure  
24 Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1601 et  
25 seq.) and individuals who were



1 former lobbyists registered under  
2 that Act; and

3 “(bb) persons registered  
4 under the Foreign Agents Reg-  
5 istration Act (22 U.S.C. 611 et  
6 seq.), foreign nationals, and other  
7 foreign agents;

8 “(II) prohibit a transition team  
9 member with conflicts of interest simi-  
10 lar to those applicable to Federal em-  
11 ployees under section 2635.402(a)  
12 and section 2635.502(a) of title 5,  
13 Code of Federal Regulations, related  
14 to current or former employment, af-  
15 filiations, clients, or investments, from  
16 working on particular matters involv-  
17 ing specific parties that affect the in-  
18 terests of such member; and

19 “(III) address how the covered  
20 eligible candidate will address his or  
21 her own conflicts of interest during a  
22 Presidential term if the covered eligi-  
23 ble candidate becomes the President-  
24 elect;

1           “(iii) a Code of Ethical Conduct,  
2           which each member of the transition team  
3           will sign and be subject to, that reflects  
4           the content of the ethics plans under this  
5           paragraph and at a minimum requires  
6           transition team members to—

7                       “(I) seek authorization from  
8                       transition team leaders or their des-  
9                       ignees before seeking, on behalf of the  
10                      transition, access to any nonpublic in-  
11                      formation;

12                     “(II) keep confidential any non-  
13                     public information provided in the  
14                     course of the duties of the member  
15                     with the transition and exclusively use  
16                     such information for the purposes of  
17                     the transition; and

18                     “(III) not use any nonpublic in-  
19                     formation provided in the course of  
20                     transition duties, in any manner, for  
21                     personal or private gain for the mem-  
22                     ber or any other party at any time  
23                     during or after the transition; and

24                     “(iv) a description of how the transi-  
25                     tion team will enforce the Code of Ethical

1                   Conduct, including the names of the mem-  
2                   bers of the transition team responsible for  
3                   enforcement, oversight, and compliance.

4                   “(C) PUBLICLY AVAILABLE.—The transi-  
5                   tion team shall make the ethics plan described  
6                   in this paragraph publicly available on the  
7                   Internet website of the General Services Admin-  
8                   istration the earlier of—

9                   “(i) the day on which the memo-  
10                  randum of understanding is completed; or

11                  “(ii) October 1.”.