



Three Ideas to Open the Executive Branch

By: Matt Rumsey – February 12, 2013

Tonight, President Obama will deliver the State of the Union Address to Congress. He is expected to urge the Legislative branch to take action on guns, immigration, climate change and a laundry list of other issues. In order to make progress on the major questions of the day, the President will have to negotiate and compromise with Congress. But, that doesn't mean he can't make progress through other means.

A few weeks ago, the Advisory Committee on Transparency heard three ideas that President Obama could consider implementing right away to make the Executive branch more open and transparent.

Jim Harper, of the Cato Institute, argued that the Federal government's organization chart should be online in a machine-readable format. According to Harper, this would allow information about the Federal government to be abstracted and analyzed in innovative ways.

Hudson Hollister, Executive Director of the Data Transparency Coalition, explained why all federal grants and contracts should have a unique government wide identifier. The Sunlight Foundation's Clearspending project has explored some of the deficiencies with Federal spending data.

Jeremy Miller, the Policy Director at Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, urged expansion of public access to the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel Opinions. The Sunlight Foundation has examined this issue and advocated for better disclosure of OLC memos in the past.

You can view all of the presentations from the event [here](#). The Advisory Committee on Transparency brings groups and individuals together to discuss transparency issues and share ideas. The Advisory Committee and the Sunlight Foundation do not necessarily endorse the ideas presented in these videos.