

**Statement of Chairman Tom Davis**  
**“Citizens’ Guide on Using the Freedom of Information Act**  
**and the Privacy Act of 1974”**  
**Committee on Government Reform**  
**2154 Rayburn House Office Building**  
**Business Meeting**  
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In 1977, the House Committee on Government Operations issued the first *Citizens Guide on Using the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act of 1974* on how to request documents and records from the Federal Government. The original Citizen’s Guides turned out to be one of the most widely read congressional committee reports in history. Since then, this Committee has periodically updated the Citizen’s guide to reflect any changes to FOIA and Privacy laws, as well as other edits.

The revisions made this year to the Citizen’s Guide are largely editorial. The suggested changes, marked up by the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census, include updated footnotes, addition of citations to helpful web sites, and other such technical corrections. This Guide is intended to serve as a general introduction to FOIA and the Privacy Act. It offers neither a comprehensive explanation of the details of these acts nor an analysis of case law, but rather teaches those who are unfamiliar with the laws how to understand the process and to make a request. It is important that the public be aware of the rights they possess with regard to information held by the Federal government. The Citizen’s Guide has proven to be a helpful way to communicate this our citizens. It is this committee’s hope that each issue of this guide continues to be found useful to the public.