

External Relations Committee Report – 2017-18

The bulk of the activities for The External Relations Committee during this reporting year (since the 2017 UCGIS meeting in Arlington, VA) was once again focused on proposed legislation at the Federal level. The current Congress has proposed numerous bills that impact not only geospatial data, but also policy and ultimately geospatial research. All of these topics are of interest to UCGIS members. A brief summary of the various bills are below.

H.R. 435 \ S 2128 – These bills are the current language for the “Geospatial Data Act of 2017.” The original versions of these bills were first introduced in May 2017, but did not move as UCGIS, COGO and other like-minded organizations found some language unfavorable to the GIS community. The current versions were introduced in November of 2017, though neither bill has progressed beyond being introduced at the time of this summary. Full text of the bills can be found at:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/4395/actions>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2128>

H.R. 482 \ S 103 – These bills are the current language for the “Local Zoning Decisions Protection Act of 2017” introduced in January 2017. The relevant (and objectionable) language in the bill includes the text “No federal funds may be used to design, build, maintain, utilize, or provide access to a federal database of geospatial information on community racial disparities or disparities in access to affordable housing.” This language is unfavorable to UCGIS members for numerous reasons. Neither bill has progressed beyond introduction at the time this summary was written. Full text available at:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/482>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/103>

H. R 1305 – American Community Survey Act - This bill proposed significant modifications to the American Community Survey. The data collected by the survey is widely used by GIS researchers and professionals. Should HR 1305 become law, the ACS data would be of much less use to UCGIS members and therefore unfavorable. This bill was introduced in March 2017 and has not progressed beyond introduction at the writing of this summary. Full text can be found at:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1305>

In addition to Federal legislation, a few State level bills were tracked and discussed by UCGIS, but are omitted here for brevity. I am happy to discuss any items of this nature where the Board would like additional information.

Respectfully submitted by,

Aaron Addison

May 18, 2018