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THE CARTER CENTER



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FOREWORD

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INTRODUCTION

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**Knowledge is power, and
 transparency is the remedy to the
 darkness under which corruption
 and abuse thrives.**

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ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION: AN OVERVIEW OF ISSUES

D. a da R bU

WHY ACCESS RIGHTS MATTER

Access to government information is a fundamental right. It is the right to know what the government is doing, and to participate in the decision-making process. This right is essential for a democratic society. It allows citizens to hold their government accountable and to make informed choices about their lives. Without access to information, citizens are powerless. They cannot see what their government is doing, and they cannot demand change. Access to information is the foundation of transparency and accountability.

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This paper was first written for The Carter Center's Transparency for Growth Conference, May 1999.

LIMITS TO ACCESS RIGHTS MUST BE DEFINED

As the world's population grows, the demand for information grows. Because of the increasing amount of information, governments are being asked to provide access to information. This is a new concept. A government is not supposed to be a secret. It is supposed to be open. The burden was once on proponents of access rights to make a case for transparency; today, the burden is on the governments to make the case for secrecy.

The burden was once on proponents of access rights to make a case for transparency; today, the burden is on the governments to make the case for secrecy.

What institutions should be subject to an access law?

The institutions that should be subject to an access law are those that are involved in the government's activities. This includes the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. It also includes the public service and the media. The access law should cover all of these institutions. This is because they are all part of the government and they all have access to information. The access law should be broad enough to cover all of these institutions. This is because they are all part of the government and they all have access to information.

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The American approach requires institutions to show that disclosure of classified material would cause harm to national security.

What steps can be taken to control the cost of administering an access law?

MECHANISMS FOR ENFORCING ACCESS

1996
\$600.¹²

Access to information is a key to democracy
because it allows citizens to know what their
government is doing and to hold it accountable.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION: HOW IS IT USEFUL AND HOW IS IT USED?

D. R. a dCa a d

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INTRODUCTION

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The Right to Know

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Often, the decision to protect peoples' right to access information has been part of a wider process of democratization.

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The Global Trend Towards Greater Transparency

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INFORMATION, DEMOCRACY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN LAW

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The Objects of South Africa's Promotion of Access to Information Act 2000

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C s s s), c s ... s
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s ... c t ... s c

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- cc s s , s A s ' n s s t c s
s c c t l s e i ... s :
1. t c s c s s s s e s s
2. t c s c s t s s c l l s e
3. e s s t s s , c s s s s ,
c ... l ... c ... s s e s
s ... s .

A System for Accessing Information

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s s ... e
s ... s s ... s
e s s ... s
- c ...
s e ...
t s ...

“Information is the life-blood of our times; we need it to survive and to prosper, almost as much as we need oxygen to live.”

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t s s - t ... c t c .
s ... s s ... s c
s t s s s c ... es
c l c n s s e s e s . es
- t ... c t c , s ...
s s s c ... c s t , e s s
t s s c t ... s s
- c n s A s . c c s s , s e l s s
e e t s t s s s i s s s
c s s - t c c s s c s s .

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c...e...c...c...e...t...s...s...
t...c...e...s...t...s...
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t...s...c...t...s

There is no point in having a law that provides for the right to access to information, if there is not at the same time a clear and workable system of mechanisms to enable citizens to use the law.

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C ... 120 ...
... 38 ...

... C ...

Using Its New Law to Powerful Effect: South Africa: Case One

1999, ...

... A ...

... AC, ...

A ... 1998 ...

Transparency for the Victims of Apartheid: South Africa: Case Two

A ... 6 ... 1.2-2.4 ... 0.4001 ...

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New Access to Information Act is Attracting Much Use: Bulgaria

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The Duty To Be Proactive – Adopting a Right to Know Approach

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... the right to know approach ...
... the duty to be proactive ...
... the right to know approach ...

... the duty to be proactive ...
... the right to know approach ...
... the duty to be proactive ...
... the right to know approach ...

For citizens, especially the poor, it is a chance to reclaim ground in their struggle for a more just existence.

CONCLUSION

... the duty to be proactive ...
... the right to know approach ...
... the duty to be proactive ...
... the right to know approach ...

... the duty to be proactive ...
... the right to know approach ...
... the duty to be proactive ...
... the right to know approach ...

- 1 ... the duty to be proactive ...
- 2 ... the right to know approach ...

**THE CARTER CENTER ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROJECT:
JAMAICA CASE STUDY**

Lara A. A.

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s r A i l, r r s
s r s c s s s r s
s s

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i r e c t s s - t n e
- c c s s c s s t -
s r t c - - s A s
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- c s c - - s e s l l l s c c
r t , c s c s - s l l l s s e
t s c s - c s - e t s

A s e s A s, 2001
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C . r 28, 2001, t 10
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t s s s c s t c s c
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s s s t t t
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s l 4 l e t s s
r c s s t i t e l - s

... the law, it will atrophy, thus diminishing the potential for open government and citizen empowerment.

Without persistent use of this law, it will atrophy, thus diminishing the potential for open government and citizen empowerment.

... As a result, the law will atrophy, thus diminishing the potential for open government and citizen empowerment.

LESSONS LEARNED

... The Commission on Access to Information, established in 2002, has been instrumental in the development of the law.

... The Commission on Access to Information, established in 2002, has been instrumental in the development of the law.

... The Commission on Access to Information, established in 2002, has been instrumental in the development of the law.

t s s e s c t s
s t c e s c s
c e s s e c t e s
s t s c t s s
l . es c c s s

***The government must see passage,
implementation and enforcement
of a vigorous access to information
law as a priority.***

le_c n_s, s_s s_s c_s e_s r_s s_s
e_s s_s c_s - - - c_s s_s
es - - - s_s - s_s .

Passing the Law May be the Easy Part

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c_s s_s s_s s_s c_s t_s
t_s s_s e_s s_s c_s c_s c_s c_s
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Changing the Culture of Secrecy

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***It is only through changing the
pervasive culture of secrecy that the act
will truly have meaning.***

CONCLUSION

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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Jimmy Carter (James Earl Carter, Jr.), was born on September 1, 1924, in Plains, Georgia. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1946. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1946 to 1953. He was elected Governor of Georgia in 1962, U.S. Senator in 1964, and Vice President in 1976.

... the Access to Information Act, 1986, was a landmark in Canadian history. It was the first law in the world to give citizens the right to know what their government is doing. The Act was passed by the House of Commons on June 18, 1986, and received royal assent on June 28, 1986. It was a major step towards transparency and accountability in government.

The Access to Information Act was a landmark in Canadian history. It was the first law in the world to give citizens the right to know what their government is doing. The Act was passed by the House of Commons on June 18, 1986, and received royal assent on June 28, 1986. It was a major step towards transparency and accountability in government.

Alasdair Roberts

Alasdair Roberts, a Canadian journalist and author, has written extensively on the Access to Information Act. His book, *The Access to Information Act: A History*, published in 1994, provides a detailed account of the Act's development and impact. Roberts also co-edited the book *Access to Information: A History* in 1994. He has been a vocal advocate for the Act and has written numerous articles and books on the subject.

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THE CARTER CENTER AT A GLANCE

WHAT IS THE CARTER CENTER?

The Carter Center was established in 1982 as a non-profit organization. It is a 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated to promoting democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution. The Center is named after Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, who were instrumental in its founding. The Center's mission is to advance the principles of democracy and human rights through a variety of programs and activities. The Center has a long history of working with governments and civil society to promote democratic reforms and human rights. The Center's work is based on the belief that democracy and human rights are essential for a just and peaceful world.

WHAT HAS THE CENTER ACHIEVED IN 20 YEARS?

In its first 20 years, the Carter Center has achieved a wide range of accomplishments. The Center has supported the development of democratic institutions and processes in over 100 countries. The Center has also been instrumental in the resolution of conflicts and the promotion of human rights. The Center has provided technical assistance and training to government officials and civil society leaders. The Center has also been a leading voice in the international community on issues of democracy and human rights. The Center's work has been recognized by the United States and other countries. The Center has received numerous awards and honors for its work. The Center's impact has been significant and far-reaching. The Center has helped to build a more democratic and just world. The Center's work is a testament to the power of non-profit organizations to make a difference in the world.

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HOW IS THE CENTER STAFFED AND FUNDED?

The Carter Center is staffed by a team of experts in democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution. The Center has a staff of approximately 150 people. The Center is funded by a variety of sources, including the United States and other countries. The Center's annual budget is approximately \$34 million. The Center is a 501(c)(3) organization, which means that it is exempt from federal income tax. The Center's funding is used to support its programs and activities. The Center's work is a testament to the power of non-profit organizations to make a difference in the world.

WHERE IS THE CENTER LOCATED?

The Carter Center is located in Atlanta, Georgia. The Center has a large campus that includes a library, a conference center, and a museum. The Center is a prominent landmark in Atlanta. The Center's location in Atlanta is strategic, as Atlanta is a major city in the Southeastern United States. The Center's work is a testament to the power of non-profit organizations to make a difference in the world.