

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 13, 1976

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
UPON SIGNING
S. 5, "GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE" BILL

THE ROSE GARDEN

12:07 P.M. EDT

Distinguished Members of the House and the Senate,
members of the Administration and guests:

It is my great privilege and honor this morning
to sign into law S. 5, the "Government in Sunshine Act."

I strongly endorse the concept which underlies
this legislation, that the decision-making process and the
decision-making business of regulatory agencies must be
open to the public.

I congratulate the Members of the Congress in
making certain that this legislation comes to the White
House and is available for my signature on this occasion.

In a democracy, the public has a right to know,
not only what the Government decides, but why and by what
process.

Today, many citizens feel that their Government
is too remote; that it is not responsive to their needs.
This legislation should go a long way in reaffirming that
Government exists for the people, not apart from the people.

Under this law some 50 regulatory agencies,
including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Civil
Service Commission and the National Science Board, are
required to give advance notice of their meetings and then
hold these meetings in public. If an agency votes to close
a session for one of the specific reasons set forth in the
law, verbatim transcripts of most such meetings would be
available to the public.

The law also prohibits any communication between
agency officials and outside persons having an interest in
matters being considered before a regulatory body. Further-
more, the Freedom of Information Act has been amended by
narrowing the authority of agencies to withhold information
from the public.

The "Government in the Sunshine Act" is in keeping
with America's proud heritage that the Government serves
and the people rule.

This afternoon, I am delighted to sign this
legislation and to reaffirm that heritage and let the
sunshine in.

END

(AT 12:09 P.M. EDT)