

Sunshine in Government Initiative

1101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1100 · Arlington, Virginia 22209
Phone (703) 807-2100 · Fax (703) 807-2109
www.SunshineInGovernment.org · info@SunshineInGovernment.org



Inaugural SGI “Sunshine Award” Goes to Lawmakers Bringing Sunshine in Government March 15, 2007

The Sunshine in Government Initiative (SGI) is pleased to announce during Sunshine Week that five leaders in government will receive SGI’s first annual *Sunshine Award* for their commitment and work to strengthen open government. Government openness is critical to the health of our democracy.

The *Sunshine Award* was created to honor individuals who have made a significant contribution over time to open government at the federal level. The Selection Committee met in January and identified these leaders for their longstanding work to strengthen the Freedom of Information (FOIA) and other open government policies and practices.

The *Sunshine Award* honorees are (in alphabetical order):

- ❖ The Honorable **John Cornyn**, U.S. Senate (Texas)
- ❖ The Honorable **Patrick Leahy**, U.S. Senate (Vermont)
- ❖ The Honorable **Todd Platts**, U.S. House of Representatives (Pennsylvania)
- ❖ The Honorable **Lamar Smith**, U.S. House of Representatives (Texas)
- ❖ The Honorable **Henry Waxman**, U.S. House of Representatives (California)

When SGI created this award, the coalition charged the Selection Committee with finding recipients who met several criteria. Each recipient contributes significantly to the public’s understanding of open government laws or how these laws impact people’s everyday lives, protects the public’s rights under open government laws such as the Freedom of Information Act; and serves in government making current, concrete and oftentimes unrecognized contributions to protecting or strengthening open government.

The action in Congress to strengthen open government in the last year has in no small part been the result of the dedication and hard work of this year’s class of recipients.

The award itself is a handsome clear sculptured obelisk reflecting the importance of transparency in government.

The Sunshine in Government Initiative is a coalition of media groups committed to promoting policies that ensure the government is accessible, accountable and open. Public oversight is the ultimate safeguard of democracy. It is the inalienable right of citizens to examine and judge their government; and that right is served when news media act on behalf of the public to gain access to information.

For media inquiries, please contact Rick Blum, SGI Coordinator at (703) 807-2100 or rblum@sunshineingovernment.org or visit www.sunshineingovernment.org.