

## RTI Amendment Bill 2019 PDF Download- Pros and Cons

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## RTI Amendment Bill 2019 PDF Download- Pros and Cons

The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019, passed with a voice vote in the Lower House, seeks to empower the central government on deciding the terms of chief information commissioners and information commissioners at both the central and state levels, as well as have a say on the salaries, allowances and other terms and conditions of service.

### RTI Act 2005:

The RTI Act, which was passed by Parliament on June 15, 2005 and came into force on October 13, 2005, sets out a regime that allows citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities in order to promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority.

This Act allowed a five year term or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier. The amendment proposes that the appointment will be for such term as may be prescribed by the central government.

### RTI Amendment Bill 2019 Pros and Cons

Several members of Opposition had called for a division of votes when consideration and passage of the bill was sought. It was defeated by 218-79 votes. Some members of Opposition also staged a walkout.

From the beginning of its first term in 2014, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has brought transparency in governance for greater public participation, Jitendra Singh, Union minister of state for personnel, public grievances and pensions, told the House while defending the Bill.

But Opposition members accused the Union government of seeking to weaken the law by gaining more control over the working of the information commissions. Several members unsuccessfully demanded that the bill be withdrawn and referred to a parliamentary committee for scrutiny.

The government can hire and fire information commissioners as they like, pay them as they chose and it will affect institutional integrity. This is the reason why, when it was introduced, ShashiTharoor had said that this is not an RTI amendment bill but an RTI elimination bill.

The protests in the Lok Sabha spilled over to the streets with the New Delhi-based National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information (NCPRI) holding a protest demonstration that was attended by transparency activists, opposition leaders and the common people.

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### RTI Amendment Bill- Proposed Amendments

The RTI Amendment Bill, 2019 proposes to amend Sections 13 and 16 of the RTI Act, 2005. The sections laid down the tenure and salaries of the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners at both the central and state level. The RTI Amendment Bill, however, proposes that the Central Government will decide the tenure, salaries and allowances of all Information Commissioners. The proposed amendments are aimed at undermining the independence of information commissions, thereby diluting India's strongest and most widely used law for transparency.

### Difference of RTI Act, 2005 and RTI Amendment Bill 2019

	RTI ACT 2005	RTI AMENDMENT BILL 2019
<b>Term</b>	CIC and Information commissioners will have a tenure of 5 years	Centre will notify the tenure of all Information commissioners at state and central level
<b>Quantum of salary</b>	CIC pay equivalent to CECs, Central ICs and State CIC to election commissioners and state ICs to Chief Secretary	Salaries and allowances of these officers will be determined by the central government
<b>Deductions in salary</b>	If such officials are receiving pension or other retirement benefits, their salary will be reduced by an amount equal to the pension	These provisions have been removed

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