



**RESOLUTION TO ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS  
TO THE PAPERS OF FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

**WHEREAS,** Current law and executive orders allow departing government officials to remove copies of government documents relating to their tenure in office and maintain exclusive access to these materials in the guise of "private" papers; and

**WHEREAS,** Many former government officials have produced lucrative memoirs based in part upon exclusive access to these collections of government documents, without the accountability which would derive from other researchers' having access to these papers; and

**WHEREAS,** The General Accounting Office and other investigations have identified significant problems with this practice by former agency heads and presidential appointees, including lack of oversight, removal of original documents and violation of classification controls; and

**WHEREAS,** Former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger took 247 linear feet of records with him when he left office in 1987, retained control of all access to them while they were deposited at the Library of Congress, received a half-million dollar advance for his memoirs which were based in part on these papers, and now stands accused of obstructing official investigations of the Iran-contra affair partly through his exclusive control of these papers; and

**WHEREAS,** Former officials' control of papers created at taxpayer expense conflicts with two long-standing principles of the American Library Association—the public's right to know and government accountability to the governed; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That the American Library Association urge Congress to pass legislation recognizing that the information accumulated by agency heads and other presidential appointees while serving in office is public property, subject to the Freedom of Information Act; and, be it further

**RESOLVED,** That the American Library Association transmit copies of this resolution to the President, the Librarian of Congress, the Archivist of the United States, and appropriate members and committees of Congress.

Adopted by the Council of the  
American Library Association  
San Francisco, California  
July 1, 1992  
(Council Document #20.10)