

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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RESOLUTION ON REAUTHORIZATION OF THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT

- WHEREAS,** The American Library Association has long held that the federal government has an affirmative obligation and responsibility to disseminate government information, regardless of format, to the public; and
- WHEREAS,** Access to government information is a public right and a principal function and goal of the federal government; and
- WHEREAS,** Attempts to reduce the paperwork burden on the public should not result in diminished access to government information; and
- WHEREAS,** The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) as implemented by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has resulted in less government information and less public access to government information; and
- WHEREAS,** OMB has interpreted PRA to encourage privatization of federal information products and services to the detriment of public access to government information; and
- WHEREAS,** Congress is now considering the reauthorization of the PRA including proposals that would dramatically alter statutory public dissemination provisions as well as OMB's role in Federal information dissemination policy making; and
- WHEREAS,** ALA has recommended numerous revisions to several PRA reauthorization bills to ensure equal, equitable, and ready access to government information; now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED,** That the American Library Association communicate to the sponsors of any bills to reauthorize the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) that their bills should have provisions that:

recognize the importance of public information as a valuable public good and the government's responsibility to ensure the free flow of government information to the public;

affirm the public's right to equal, equitable, and ready access to government information; and

establish the affirmative obligation of government agencies to disseminate information, regardless of format, and in ways which maximize its usefulness;

require government agencies to assume an affirmative obligation to distribute government information, regardless of format, through the Depository Library Program;

provide greater public accountability for OMB and agency decision making;

require agencies to utilize the Government Printing Office (GPO) for the production and dissemination of information products and services; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That these bills also include provisions that:

retain in Congress overall information dissemination authority and strengthen Congressional oversight responsibility;

continue the reliance on checks and balances on the power to make and implement information policy;

ensure that responsibility for implementing government information policies remains with the head of each federal agency, rather than the OMB;

guarantee that public access to electronic government information is provided through depository libraries;

ensure that any fee the government charges for acquiring or using government information be less than or limited to the marginal cost of dissemination;

affirm that government information should be in the public domain;

strengthen the government's obligation to archive and preserve government information, regardless of formats;

protect the privacy rights of individuals and groups from unwarranted government intrusion;

require federal agencies to disseminate government information to the public, regardless of format, complete with software, indexes, and documentation needed to facilitate the usefulness and public access to government information;

establish no restrictive factors to be considered by an agency in determining how to carry out its public information dissemination functions, particularly if the factors require consideration of equivalent public or private information products or services, denigrate the role of the government agency, and elevate the role of the private sector at the expense of the public;

assure that public notice of agency plans to change dissemination policies precede any review by the OMB;

limit the reauthorization of the Paperwork Reduction Act to two years; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the appropriate Congressional committees and federal officials.

Adopted by the Council of the
American Library Association
Atlanta, Georgia
July 3, 1991
(Council Document #77.4)