

RESOLUTION ON THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO FEDERAL INFORMATION

WHEREAS, The right of free and equal access for all people to information and ideas is essential to a democratic society; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, a combination of specific policy decisions, the Administration's interpretations and implementations of the 1980 Paperwork Reduction Act, implementation of the Grace Commission recommendations and agency budget cuts have significantly limited access to public information; and

WHEREAS, These government policies result in privatization and commercialization of information disseminated by government agencies; curtailment of government collection of statistical and technical data; restriction of sensitive but unclassified information; restraints on scientific communication through export control systems; narrow interpretations of the Freedom of Information Act; and establishment of pre-publication review procedures for federal employees and researchers; and

WHEREAS, The American Library Association has a long record of action in support of access to information, and believes that open government is vital to a democracy and that there should be equal and ready access to information collected, compiled, produced and disseminated by the government of the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association call on the next President of the United States to take immediate executive action to:

- 1) Affirm a policy of free and open access to information by and about the U.S. government, consistent with the First Amendment;
- 2) Restrict no information solely on the basis that it is sensitive but unclassified;
- 3) Ensure that government information be readily and equally available to the public;
- 4) Protect the privacy rights of individuals and groups from unwarranted government intrusion;
- 5) Curtail the inappropriate classification of government information; and
- 6) Limit the role of the Office of Management and Budget in controlling information collected, created and disseminated by the federal government; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association send this resolution and a copy of "Less Access..." to political party nominees qualifying for inclusion on the ballot in the states and territories for the Office of President of the United States.

Adopted by the Council of the
American Library Association
New Orleans, Louisiana
July 13, 1988
(Council Document #75)