

FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

WHEREAS, information is essential for all persons at all age levels and all economic and social levels, and

WHEREAS, publicly supported libraries are "institutions of education for democratic living" (Library Bill of Rights), and exist to provide information to all persons, and

WHEREAS, increased use of automated bibliographic data bases (many of which have been developed with tax funds) has caused some publicly supported libraries to charge for those services, which practice may set precedent for further fee setting, and

WHEREAS, the charging of fees for information deprives service to those who cannot afford the fees, and thus effectively discriminates against them, and

WHEREAS, ALA has urged the free flow of information and has spoken out clearly against all obstacles that stand in the way of an individual's access to ideas and information,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ALA affirm its belief in the concept of access to information, without charge to individuals, in public and other publicly supported libraries, and be it further

Council deleted these words

RESOLVED, that the ALA Council develop and approve the following statement of policy:

It shall be the policy of the American Library Association to assert that the charging of fees and levies for information services, including those services utilizing the latest information technology, is discriminatory in publicly supported institutions providing library and information services.

It shall be the policy of the American Library Association to seek to make it possible for library and information service agencies which receive their major support from public funds to provide service to all people without additional fees and to utilize the latest technological developments to insure the best possible access to information; and that

The Association will, through an active program of information, education, and the formulation of future policy and programming, actively promote its position on equal access to information.

Submitted to ALA Membership
Approved by the Membership of the Social Responsibilities
Round Table June 17, 1977

YASD *Bob Anderson*