

February 12, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20500

Re: Ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print-Disabled

Dear President Obama:

The undersigned organizations write to reiterate the request made in the December 22, 2014 letter the National Federation of the Blind sent you urging the White House to put its full support behind United States ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print-Disabled (the Marrakesh Treaty). In particular, the letter urged the White House to ensure that the U.S Department of State's ratification package facilitates a prompt ratification by not suggesting that major modifications to the Copyright Act are necessary to implement the Marrakesh Treaty. The letter stated that proposing unduly complex changes to the Copyright Act in the ratification package could impede ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, disrupt the status quo under which accessible format copies currently are made available in the United States and even jeopardize the Beijing Treaty on Audiovisual Performances. The letter included concerns over reports that some in the interagency group working on the ratification package were calling for such amendments.

Since then, we have heard reports that the interagency group is considering changes even more extensive than those that prompted the December 22 letter, changes that can hardly be categorized as narrow. Amendments this sweeping magnify the risks identified above. Accordingly, we reiterate the request that the White House urge the interagency group to propose a simple ratification package that will not interfere with the ratification process.

With 50 million visually impaired people, India, in July 2014, was the first country to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty. In the spirit of your recently concluded trip to India, the United States should promptly join India in ratifying the Marrakesh Treaty.

Respectfully,

American Council of the Blind
American Foundation for the Blind
American Library Association
Association of College and Research Libraries
Association of Research Libraries
Benetech
Creative Commons USA
National Federation of the Blind
Open Society Policy Center