

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS

WHEREAS, the online environment is an essential and growing part of economic, cultural, civic and social life; and

WHEREAS, the use of new Internet-based applications for collaboration and learning are increasingly important; and

WHEREAS, learning to use the online environment effectively and safely is an essential component of education and is increasingly promoting collaborative learning and social environments; and

WHEREAS, classrooms, school libraries and public libraries are the locations where a major part of this education occurs and where professional teachers and librarians are the adults best trained to educate young people to use online environments effectively and safely; and

WHEREAS, the development of essential information literacy skills require that young people be able to safely and effectively use these important new collaborative tools; and

WHEREAS, schools and libraries are critical environments for learning these skills and already have Internet use policies; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 5319, the Deleting Online Predators Act (DOPA), as presently drafted, would require schools and libraries receiving E-rate discounts to block library computer users from accessing collaborative networking sites like MySpace, and would also bar access to a wide array of other important applications and technologies such as instant messaging, e-mail, wikis and blogs; and

WHEREAS, the H.R., 5319, the Deleting Online Predators Act, (DOPA) would require schools and libraries receiving E-rate funds to block important access to important new network-based collaborative environments that foster these crucial skills in our young people; and

WHEREAS, "DOPA" would place prior restraints on and denies access to constitutionally protected speech; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 5319 is unnecessary because schools and libraries receiving E-rate funds are already required to block obscene content; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association oppose the Deleting Online Predators Act as it is presently drafted; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the American Library Association affirm the importance of online social networks to library users of all ages for developing and using essential information literacy skills; and be it further

RESOLVED, that ALA ask library supporters to contact their representatives and senators to inform them about the important role “social networking sites” serve in civic participation, collaboration, etc. and about problems caused by mandatory blocking as proposed in H.R. 5319; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that ALA communicate this resolution to the United States Congress and to others, as appropriate.

Policy: 1.3-F

Policy History: CD#20.2, 2002; CD#21.13, 6/29/94

Endorsed by:

Committee on Legislation

Office of Internet Technology and Policy Advisory Committee

Young Adult Library Services Association

Endorsed in Principle:

Intellectual Freedom Committee

Endorsed by ALA Council 6/28/06