

Joint Letter to All Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Opposing H.R. 354, the "Collections of Information Antipiracy Act"

Letter to all Members of the House of Representatives

February 9, 2000

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Abercrombie:

On behalf of the undersigned higher education, library, and scientific groups representing thousands of educational institutions, libraries, librarians, and scientists throughout the United States, we are writing to express our opposition to H.R. 354, the "Collections of Information Antipiracy Act." We understand that the House leadership is considering bringing H.R. 354 before the House for a vote. We do not believe that H.R. 354 in its current form should be brought to a vote. If it is, we ask that you vote against it.

We appreciate the improvements made by the Judiciary Committee to H.R. 354, but serious problems remain. In its current form, the bill still provides overly broad protection for "collections of information" that threatens seriously to impair the conduct of the nation's research and education programs. The legislation would also reduce the public's access to information; under H.R. 354, practices that are legal and customary today would not be permitted. Although H.R. 354 purports to be a "technology" bill, it in fact is anti-technology, weakening the very research and development activities that have fueled the vigorous growth in new technologies, digital networks, and electronic commerce and communication.

Our organizations fully support appropriately targeted protection for databases. H.R. 1858, the "Consumer and Investor Access to Information Act," provides such appropriately targeted protection for collections of information while preserving essential access to the elements of those databases. Indeed, the enclosed New York Times editorial recognizes the importance of such a balance between protection of and access to information.

We look forward to working with Congress to produce legislation that provides protection for databases while preserving critical access to information needed for education, research, and an informed citizenry.

Cordially,

Nils Hasselmo
President

NH/JCV/ljj

Enclosure

On behalf of:

American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Law Libraries
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Council on Education
American Library Association
Association of American Universities
Association of Research Libraries
Council of Graduate Schools
Council on Governmental Relations
Medical Library Association
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
Special Libraries Association
University Continuing Education Association

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