

Joint Library Associations' Letter to The Honorable David Dreier, Chairman House Committee on Rules

October 12, 1999

The Honorable David Dreier
Chairman, House Committee on Rules
H-312 Capitol Building
Washington D.C. 20515-6269

Dear Chairman Dreier:

On behalf of the Nation's leading library associations representing well over 80,000 librarians and institutions throughout the United States, we are writing to express our opposition to H.R. 354, the "Collections of Information Antipiracy Act." We oppose H.R. 354 because it provides overly broad protection for a "collection of information" that would reduce the public's access to information and unreasonably burden scientific research, scholarship, and education.

We believe that H.R. 354 will have detrimental and costly effects on the research and education enterprise. For example, for the first time, the legislation would provide protection for factual information. This would overturn our Nation's information policy - a policy in place for over 200 years. In addition, it would allow a producer or publisher of the collection of information, unprecedented control over uses of that information, including the downstream use of facts. H.R. 354 includes an exemption for education and research activities, that although improved from earlier versions, remains far too narrow. In fact, practices that are customary and legal today would not be permitted under H.R. 354. Finally, provisions in the bill provide for, in effect, perpetual protection of a collection for dynamic compilations in electronic form. This would significantly deplete the public domain over time.

Please let us know if there is additional information that we can provide.

Sincerely,

Duane E. Webster
Executive Director
Association of Research Libraries

On behalf of:
Association of Research Libraries
American Association of Law Libraries
American Library Association
Medical Library Association
Special Libraries Association

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