

# **National Academy of Engineering Letter to The Honorable David Dreier, Chairman House Committee on Rules**

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October 13, 1999

Representative David Dreier  
U.S. House of Representatives  
237 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Dreier:

I am writing on behalf of the National Academies in opposition to a floor vote in this session of Congress on H.R. 345, the "Collections of Information Antipiracy Act." The National Academies have had an abiding interest in the legislative debates concerning H.R. 354 and its predecessor bills for over three years. We have testified at two hearings on this legislation in October 1997, and again in March of this year, and have written several letters to the House Committee on the Judiciary in the spirit of constructive criticism. As we concluded in our last letter to Howard Coble, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property, on May 25, 1999, the bill was "not ready for markup by the Committee on the Judiciary, much less for action by the House of Representatives." The full Committee's markup of the bill unfortunately only amplified our reservations. I should note as well that the National Research Council will be releasing a report on this topic, A Question of Balance: Private Rights and the Public Interest in Scientific and Technical Databases, to the public on October 19. The report explores in detail some of the major issues underlying this legislation and offers guiding principles for such legislation and its implementation.

We, therefore, urge you to approach these far-reaching changes to our intellectual property system with caution and due deliberation, in order to avoid serious, unintended harm to our national system of innovation and our information economy. It is important to emphasize that our concerns are not unique, but are shared by a very broad-based constituency. At the same time, we remain committed to working with you and other members of Congress to find a legislative solution that will be good for all those who produce and use databases.

I would be pleased to discuss this important matter further with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Wm. A. Wulf  
President, National Academy of Engineering

Copy:

Bruce Alberts, National Academy of Sciences  
Kenneth I. Shine, National Institute of Medicine

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