

OMB Supports Release of Supreme Court Decisions

September 27, 1996

Sally Katzen
Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Old Executive Office Building, Room 350
17th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Ms. Katzen:

The [American Association of Law Libraries \(AALL\)](#) and the [Association of Research Libraries \(ARL\)](#) are pleased to learn that the U.S. Air Force has agreed to release the file of [Supreme Court opinions](#) covering 1937 through 1975 that are part of "Federal Legal Information Through Electronics" (FLITE). Our associations strongly affirm the principles of public access to government information that guarantee an informed citizenry. Access to the law of the land is certainly a fundamental right for all Americans. The decision to make the FLITE Supreme Court records available at this time at no cost through both GPO ACCESS and FEDWORLD is a welcome development.

The American Association of Law Libraries is a nonprofit educational organization headquartered in Chicago with over 5,000 members nationwide. Our members respond to the legal and governmental information needs of legislators, judges, and other public officials at all levels of government, corporations and small businesses, law professors and students, attorneys, and members of the general public. The Association of Research Libraries is a nonprofit organization representing 119 research libraries located in the United States and Canada.

The U.S. Air Force created FLITE as an experimental electronic database in 1963, back in the very nascent days of computer technology. Although created and maintained by government employees and at government expense, its contents have never been available to the public. Today, however, we live in exciting times as citizens, students, teachers, and researchers can access the electronic information of all levels of government from their libraries, schools, offices and homes.

The federal government has been at the leading edge of this information revolution, and both the Clinton Administration and Congress are committed to using the latest technologies to enhance citizen access to information from all three branches of government. Congress in fact just last week passed the Electronic Freedom of Information Act (H.R. 3802) that President Clinton is expected to sign shortly. We applaud the provisions of this bill that extend the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to electronic agency information and that ensure a timely response to FOIA requests.

It is fitting and proper that the sixty-years of Supreme Court opinions contained in FLITE that have recently been released to the public are now equally available to all citizens on the Internet. We applaud both this decision and your personal efforts in working with Air Force officials to make the release of these materials a reality. In addition, we look forward to the day when the American public will have the same electronic access to the remaining post-1975 Supreme Court decisions. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Oakley

American Association of Law Libraries
Washington Affairs Representative

Prudence S. Adler
Assistant Executive Director
Association of Research Libraries

cc: Sheila E. Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force
Honorable Major Owens, U.S. House of Representatives
Honorable Bernard Sanders, U.S. House of Representatives
James Love, Taxpayer Assets Project

[Return to Government Information Table of Contents](#)



[ARL Home](#)

© Association of Research Libraries, Washington, DC

Web Design by [Ann Doty](#)

Maintained by [ARL Web Administrator](#)

Last Modified: August 19, 2001