



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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## **LIBRARY COMMUNITY OPPOSES BILL TO RESTRICT ACCESS TO DATA**

**Washington, D.C.** Speaking on behalf of five of the nation's leading library organizations—the American Association of Law Libraries, the American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, the Medical Library Association, and the Special Libraries Association—Prue Adler, Associate Executive Director, ARL, voiced the opposition of the library community to the recently introduced “Database and Collections of Information Misappropriation Act” (H.R. 3261).

For over 200 years, facts—the building blocks of knowledge—have been in the public domain. The proposed legislation “would end this long-standing policy that has allowed the public and private sectors to flourish, advance research, and create a vibrant marketplace.” Access to the broad array of research information, Ms. Adler noted, is critical to the health and wealth of society.

The approach taken in H.R. 3261 is strikingly at odds with how scientific and research discovery is conducted. The scientific, research, and library communities increasingly support “open access,” which encourages the sharing of data and information to promote the advancement of science and innovation.

Many in the scientific community embrace open access because it builds upon the strengths of our scientific enterprise; because of restrictions that are placed by journal publishers on use of information in scientific journals; and because of the high cost of many journal subscriptions. Prices for journals have increased well beyond the consumer price index for several decades. The median prices for research journals rose at least 192 percent—more than three times the rate of inflation—between 1986 and 2000. Libraries are forced to cancel subscriptions or eliminate access to other resources due to the escalating costs of commercial journals. As access to journals declines, research efforts may be duplicated, unproductive lines of research may continue, and innovation will be impeded.

Implementing a new legal regime such as proposed in the “Database and Collections of Information Misappropriation Act” would extend the monopoly that currently plagues research journals. It would further exacerbate the market environment in which libraries and the research community currently operate and lead to reduced competition and inhibit new entry into the science,

technology, and medicine (STM) marketplace. Simply put, such legislation would further erode the ability of libraries to provide researchers, scholars, students, and the public with needed information.

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The **American Association of Law Libraries** (AALL) is a nonprofit educational organization with 5,000 members dedicated to providing leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy. □ Contact: □ Robert Oakley (202-662-9160)

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The **American Library Association** (ALA) is a nonprofit educational organization of over 64,000 librarians, library trustees, and other friends of libraries dedicated to improving library services and promoting the public interest in a free and open information society. Contact: □ Miriam Nisbet (202-628-8410)

The **Association of Research Libraries** (ARL) is a nonprofit organization of 124 research libraries in North America. ARL programs and services promote equitable access to and effective use of recorded knowledge in support of teaching, research, scholarship, and community service. Contact: □ Prue Adler (202-296-2296)

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The **Special Libraries Association** (SLA) is an international professional association serving more than 14,000 members of the information profession, including special librarians, information managers, brokers, and consultants. □ Contact: □ Doug Newcomb (202-939-3676)

The **Medical Library Association** (MLA) is a nonprofit, educational organization of more than 900 institutions and 3,800 individual members in the health sciences information field. Contact: Mary Langman (312-419-9094)