

December 18, 2007

The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka  
United States Senate  
141 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
*Sent via fax: (202) 224-2126*

Dear Senator Akaka:

The American Association of Law Libraries, The American Library Association, and The Special Libraries Association write to express our strong support for the **Plain Language in Government Communications Act of 2007** (S. 2291) that includes reforms to require federal agencies to use plain language best practices for forms, websites, and other federal agency communications. S.2291 will enhance public understanding of government information, facilitate access to government services, and increase government transparency. Using plain language for government forms and services will also assist libraries that provide instruction and access to E-Government services to the public.

Recent studies reflect that libraries are providing E-Government services to those without access to a computer and the Internet as well as those lacking the requisite bandwidth needed to use today's Internet sites and services. Quite often, librarians have become unintended experts on forms for programs such as Medicare and the prescription drug plan. Libraries are not only serving the disadvantaged and elderly, but also individuals that want one-on-one assistance in maneuvering these complex government agency sites and forms. Steps to make federal agency sites and forms more understandable help the public and libraries that are taking on the burden of E-Government delivery for federal agencies.


We applaud your commitment and leadership in serving the public and improving access to government information and services. Thank you for your leadership on this good government legislation, and please let us know how we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Acting Washington Affairs Representative  
American Association of Law Libraries  
E. B. Williams Law Library

111 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC  
p. 202.662.9200, f. 202.662.4059  
baish@law.georgetown.edu  
<http://www.aallnet.org/aallwash/>

AALL is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5000 members nationwide who respond to the legal information needs of a variety of users: 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. AALL's mission is to promote and enhance the value of law libraries, to foster law librarianship and to provide leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy.



Emily Sheketoff  
Executive Director of the Washington Office  
American Library Association  
1615 New Hampshire Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
p. 202.628.8410, f. 202-628-8419  
esheketoff@alawash.org  
<http://www.alawash.org>

Founded in 1876, the American Library Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world with 66,000 individual members and 4,000 library and corporate members dedicated to improving library services and promoting the public interest in a free and open information society.



Douglas Newcomb, CAE  
Chief Policy Officer  
Special Libraries Association  
331 South Patrick Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3501  
p. 703.647.4923, f. 703.647.4904  
DNewcomb@sla.org  
<http://www.sla.org>

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) is a nonprofit global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners. SLA serves more than 12,000 members in 83 countries in the information profession, including corporate, academic and government information specialists. SLA promotes and strengthens its members through learning, advocacy and networking initiatives.

