

On Monday, January 27, 2014, the ALA Council **DEFEATED** the adoption of the

Resolution on Whistleblower Edward Snowden

Whereas in 2004 ALA passed a “Resolution on Securing Government Accountability through Whistleblower Protection” affirming its “support for accountable government and the role of whistleblowers in reporting abuse, fraud, and waste in governmental activities” (CD#20.7, 2004);

Whereas in 2008 ALA passed a “Resolution Commending the FBI Whistleblower Who Exposed Abuses on the Use of Exigent National Security Letters” stating that ALA “commends Mr. Bassem Youssef for bringing these serious abuses before the ALA and the American public,” and “supports and defends Mr. Youssef’s right to report on FBI abuses,” and “urges the FBI to desist from any retaliation against Mr. Youssef for speaking before us” CD#20.5, 2008);

Whereas in 2011 ALA passed a “Resolution on Access to and Classification of Government Information,” which urged “Congress to pass legislation that expands protections for whistleblowers in the Federal government, such as the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2010” (CD#19.1, 2011); and also urged “the U.S. President, Congress, the federal courts, and executive and legislative agencies to defend the inalienable right of the press and citizens to disseminate information to the public about national security issues and to refrain from initiatives that impair these rights” (CD#19.1, 2011);

Whereas in 2013 ALA passed a “Resolution on the Need for Reforms for the Intelligence Community to Support Privacy, open Government, Government Transparency, and Accountability,” which

1. reaffirmed “its unwavering support for the fundamental principles that are the foundation of our free and democratic society, including a system of public accountability, government transparency, and oversight that supports people’s right to know about and participate in our government”;
2. referred to recent “revelations related to NSA’s surveillance activities conducted pursuant to orders issued by the Foreign Intelligent Surveillance Court (FISC) under Sections 215 and 702 of the USA PATRIOT Act”;
3. in light of these revelations, called upon “upon the U.S. Congress, President Obama, and the Courts to reform our nation’s climate of secrecy, overclassification, and secret law regarding national security and surveillance, to align with these democratic principles”;
4. stated that ALA “values access to the documents disclosing the extent of public surveillance and government secrecy as access to these documents now enables the critical public discourse and debate needed to address the balance between our civil liberties and national security” and noted that “these disclosures enable libraries to support such discourse and debate by providing information and resources and for deliberative dialogue and community engagement”;
5. noted that ALA “remains concerned about due process for the people who have led us to these revelations”; and

6. expressed "its thanks and appreciation to the members of Congress who work to protect our privacy and civil liberties"(CD#19.2 and CD#20.40);

Whereas Edward Snowden, formerly a computer specialist for a contractor employed by the National Security Agency, has admitted to providing to the news media the recently disclosed classified documents revealing mass NSA surveillance of the U.S. and global publics;

Whereas Edward Snowden has explained that his "sole motive" in revealing this information was "to inform the public as to that which was done in their name and that which is done against them";

Whereas in June 2013 both the ALA membership and ALA Council explicitly recognized "Edward Snowden as a whistleblower who, in releasing information that documents government attacks on privacy, free speech, and freedom of association, has performed a valuable service in launching a national dialogue about transparency, domestic surveillance, and overclassification," (MMD#5, 2013; CD#39, 2013) but this resolution was effectively rescinded by the adoption of a substitute resolution (CD#19.2 and CD#20.40);

Whereas as a direct consequence of the Snowden revelations, numerous bills have been introduced in Congress limiting the mass collection of data of U.S. citizens; and

Whereas despite his temporary asylum in Russia, Edward Snowden faces the possibility of eventual extradition and prosecution for releasing this information; now, therefore be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA) recognizes Edward Snowden, as a whistleblower who, in releasing information that documents the mass surveillance programs of the National Security Agency, has performed a valuable service in launching a dialogue about transparency, government surveillance, and overclassification.

Moved by Diedre Conkling
Seconded by Jane Glasby

Citations

CD#20.7, 2004

<http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/wo/reference/colresolutions/PDFs/0002-CD20.7.pdf>

CD#20.5, 2008

<http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/wo/reference/colresolutions/PDFs/COL%20Resolution%20on%20Ba.pdf>

CD,#19.1, 2011

http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2011mw_council_docs/cd19_19_1_ifc.pdf

CD#19.2 and CD#20.40, 2013<http://www.oif.ala.org/oif/?p=4803>

MMD#5, 2013 and CD#39,

2013http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2013_annual_council_docs/cd_39_edward_snowden-%28ff%29.pdf

FISA and NSA Resolutions Introduced in the 113th Congress (Revised 11/1/13)

http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/privacyconfidentiality/fisa_nsa_113th_congress.pdf

Submitted on Fri, 01/17/2014 - 14:41

Submitted by user:

Submitted values are:

Date:

Resolution author(s): Members of SRRT: jane.glasby@sbcglobal.net;
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1. Title of Resolution: Resolution on Whistleblower Edward Snowden

2. ALA Units and/or Committees Consulted (if any): SRRT

3. Endorsements by ALA Units and/or Committees (if any): None at this time

4. Fiscal implications: Specify the resources needed to carry out the resolution's directive(s):

None (Except for cost of distributing resolution to designated recipients)

5. List all parties to whom resolution should be sent:

Edward Snowden (if no other address available, could be sent c/o Glenn Greenwald, The Guardian); Bradley Manning Support Network; President Barack Obama; Attorney General Eric Holder; all members of Congress; the library press; The New York Times; The Washington Post; The Guardian

6. Impact on ALA Policies and Positions: Explain how the resolution supports ALA's Strategic Plan, its mission, and/or its core values.:

This resolution applies existing ALA policies and precedents in support of privacy and intellectual freedom, in opposition to government surveillance of library users, and in defense of whistleblowers.

6a) ALA general policy or viewpoint: If the resolution sets forth a general policy or an ALA viewpoint, describe.:

This resolution implicitly reaffirms existing ALA policies and precedents in support of privacy and intellectual freedom, in opposition to government surveillance of library users, and in defense of whistleblowers.

6b) Change in existing policy: If this resolution necessitates a change in existing policy, state the policy number and the change.: N/A

6c) New policy: If this resolution establishes new policy, describe.: N/A

6d) Policy conflicts: If this resolution conflicts with existing policy, state provisions for resolving the conflict.: N/A

7. Initiating Committee or Unit (if any): SRRT

8. Pertinent Background Information, e.g. bibliography, citations, supportive

quotes, URLs, etc.:

1939 Code of Ethics for Librarians

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=History1&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=8875>)

2002 "Principles for the Networked World"

<http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/oitp/publications/issuebriefs/principles/principles.pdf>)

2002 "Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights"

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=interpretations&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=132904>)

2003 "Resolution on the USA Patriot Act and Related Measures that Infringe on the Rights of Library Users"

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=ifresolutions&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=11891>)

CD#20.7, 2004

<http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/wo/reference/colresolutions/PDFs/000002-CD20.7.pdf>)

2005 "Resolution on Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Technology and Privacy Principles "

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=ifresolutions&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=85331>)

2008 Amended Code of Ethics

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/proethics/codeofethics/Code%20of%20Ethics%20of%20the%20American%20Library%20Association.pdf>)

CD#20.5, 2008

<http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/wo/reference/colresolutions/PDFs/COL%20Resolution%20on%20Ba.pdf>)

Choose Privacy Week: <http://chooseprivacyweek.org/>

Resolution on the Need for Reforms for the Intelligence Community to Support Privacy, Open Government, Government Transparency, and Accountability in both COL report CD#20.4 page 6

(http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2013_annual_council_docs/cd_20_3_COL%20report%20FINAL.pdf)

and the IFC report CD#19.2 page 5

(http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2013_annual_council_docs/cd_19_1_ifc_report%20%28final%29.pdf)

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