

Resolution on Public Access to Congressional Service Reports

Whereas, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) is a federal agency, housed within the Library of Congress, that prepares public policy research for members of Congress, including nonconfidential publications;

Whereas the American Library Association passed the “Resolution on Congressional Research Service Publications” at its 1998 Midwinter Meetings in New Orleans (January 14, 1998; Council Document 2003) to “urge the Joint Committee on the Library, the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, and the House Oversight Committee to take immediate action to assure that publicly released Congressional Research Service reports in information products are distributed in a timely manner to the general public through Federal Depository Libraries and on the Internet”

Whereas, the American Library Association passed the “Resolution on the Need to Improve Public Access to Government Information During the 107th Congress” at its 2000-2001 Midwinter Conference, CD# 20.3 “urge Congress to enact legislation establishing the affirmative responsibility of the federal government to provide current, continuous, and future public access to government information at no fee to the public; ensuring the authenticity and integrity of electronic government information in all formats, and ; improving and facilitating public access to government information in all formats/media through comprehensive identification, cataloging, indexing, locator, and verification activities that are centrally coordinated by the Superintendent of Documents”

Whereas, on March 23, 2018 the President of the United States signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (PL 115-141) which directed the Library of Congress to establish a public website with free access to CRS reports.

Whereas, on September 17, 2018 Librarian of Congress Carla D. Hayden announced that the Library of Congress is providing public access to CRS reports at <https://crsreports.congress.gov>

Whereas, over 800 CRS reports have since been made accessible through the Government Publishing Office’s Catalog of Government Publications (<https://catalog.gpo.gov/>)

Therefore be it resolved that the American Library Association gratefully acknowledges the efforts of legislators who secured this long sought provision, particularly Representatives Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Mike Quigley (D-IL), former Representatives Kevin Yoder (R-KS) and Leonard Lance (R-NJ), Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), and the late Senator John McCain (R-AZ) for improving the nation’s access to taxpayer funded information resources, and

Encourages the Library of Congress and Congressional Research Service to continue development of the website in order to provide the most comprehensive and useful public access, and to invite suggestions for improving public access from librarians and users; and

Thanks all ALA members and others that have over the years advocated for access to CRS reports as well as improved access to our governments’ information in all formats or media.