

Statement on Library Filters and Internet Use

Passed by the Kentucky Library Association on March 24, 2001

The Kentucky Library Association supports the principle of open, free and unrestricted access to information and ideas, regardless of the format in which they appear. The Association endorses the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and its Resolution on the Use of Filtering Software in Libraries. The Association supports the rights of all individuals to determine which resources are appropriate and necessary for themselves as well as the responsibility of all parents to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services.

The Association recognizes the issues and concerns generated from providing full access to the Internet. Although use of Internet filters to restrict access to certain kinds of information on the Internet has been suggested as a solution to these problems such use raises ethical and legal concerns for libraries. On June 26, 1997, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a sweeping affirmation of First Amendment principles and held that information communicated over the Internet merits the highest level of Constitutional protection. Due to the imperfections of filters, valuable information is blocked, thus preventing individuals from retrieving the information and constitutionally protected speech they seek as well as preventing the library from fulfilling its basic mission.

The Association strongly recommends that decisions regarding the use of Internet filters remain with local boards and that each library develop an Internet Use Policy containing guidelines for use of the Internet by all library users, both adults and children. Each local library should decide what educational, informational, and research Internet services they will provide based on their mission.