



May 26, 2006

James H. Billington  
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The Library of Congress  
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**CC: Joint Committee on the Library**

Ted Stevens, Vice Chairman  
Thad Cochran  
Trent Lott  
Christopher Dodd  
Charles Schumer

Dear Dr. Billington,

On behalf of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) and the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) we write to urge the Library of Congress to delay its decision to discontinue providing series authority control for bibliographic records beyond the scheduled implementation date of June 1, 2006. This delay will allow libraries and librarians sufficient time to assess the possible consequences of this decision on libraries and their users, to determine if there are appropriate alternatives, or to develop and present modifications to this decision.

The Library of Congress is funded by the Congress to provide adequate access to its collections for its users and their constituents, and has set standards for cataloging practices and quality records that have been the benchmarks used by other libraries across the country. Libraries rely on the Library of Congress and its authority work, subject analysis, and careful application of cataloging rules for consistent access. Throughout its history, the Library of Congress has been on the vanguard in the creation and development of these nationally recognized standards and protocols.

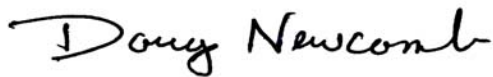
Members of SLA and AALL are dismayed that we will no longer be able to count on the complete access to information that series authority control records created by the Library of Congress provides. Key word searching is not an adequate substitute. We are particularly concerned about the future of consistent name authority headings and the future of consistent subject access. These issues are so important to libraries and their users that they must be continued, meaning that the burden will fall on individual libraries to create the necessary records. This will cause an economic burden on libraries already crippled by massive cuts in their funding.

We are further dismayed that senior level Library of Congress officials did not gather input from the people who would be most affected by this decision -- the general public of the nation and

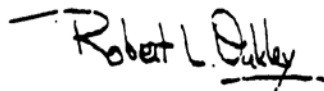
those who work in our nation's libraries. Not enough time was given for librarians to assess these changes and possibly offer alternative solutions. We strongly urge the Library of Congress to consult with library associations and organizations and librarians who understand the ramifications of these decisions before changes to the application of Library of Congress Subject Headings and other cataloging practices are made.

We recommend that the Library of Congress should meet with appropriate representatives of the major national library associations and bibliographic entities to discuss its decision regarding series authority control for bibliographic records. These deliberations will enable the Library of Congress and those affected by its decision – citizens who are library users, librarians and others – to reach some consensus about the modification of cataloging processes that will be satisfactory to all involved.

Sincerely,



Douglas Newcomb  
Chief Policy Officer  
Special Libraries Association



Robert L. Oakley  
Washington Affairs Representative  
American Association of Law Libraries

The **Special Libraries Association** (SLA) is a nonprofit global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners. SLA serves more than 11,000 members in 75 countries in the information profession, including corporate, academic and government information specialists. SLA promotes and strengthens its members through learning, advocacy and networking initiatives. <http://www.sla.org/>  
Contact: Doug Newcomb (703-647-4923)

The **American Association of Law Libraries** (AALL) is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5,000 members nationwide. AALL's mission is to promote and enhance the value of law libraries to the legal and public communities, to foster the profession of law librarianship, and to provide leadership in the field of legal information and information policy.  
<http://www.aall.org/>  
Contact: Mary Alice Baish (202-662-9200)