



American Association of Law Libraries

MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF THE LAW LIBRARY COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

May 20, 2009

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senate
706 Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Lieberman and McCain:

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), I write to thank you for introducing S. Res. 118, which would ensure no-fee public access through the Internet to unclassified, taxpayer-funded Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports. We strongly support S. Res. 118 and commend you for your long-standing efforts to provide access to these important research materials.

AALL is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5000 members nationwide. Our members serve the information needs of the legal community and the public at more than 1900 academic, firm, state, court and county law libraries. 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.

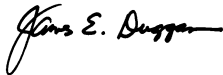
AALL is equally committed to ensuring equitable public access to CRS reports, particularly because CRS receives more than \$100 million dollars of taxpayer support each year. Although constituents are able to request individual reports from their congressional representatives if they know a report is available, there is no guaranteed way for an individual or organization to know what reports have even been published. S. Res. 118 would require an index of reports be made available, and the centralized electronic system would allow members of the public to easily search for reports of research interest to them.

Web sites such as Open CRS, the University of North Texas Libraries and Wikileaks have provided a public service by collectively making thousands of reports freely available online, and commercial third-party services offer the reports for a fee. The heavy use of these resources demonstrates the public's strong interest in these reports. In fact, public access to

CRS reports was ranked first of ten most requested documents in the recent “Show Us the Data” report by OpenTheGovernment.org, of which AALL is a member, and the Center for Democracy & Technology.

AALL recognizes your continuing commitment to establishing no-fee access to CRS reports. We commend you for introducing S. Res. 118. Our organization and members will work tirelessly in support of your legislation. We thank you your for continued efforts to ensure public access to these valuable documents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James E. Duggan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

James Duggan
President
American Association of Law Libraries