June 26, 2015

The Honorable Kenyan McDuffie  
Chair, Committee on the Judiciary  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The John A. Wilson Building, Suite 506  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Chair McDuffie,

We write on behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) and Law Librarians’ Society of Washington, D.C. (LLSDC) in support of the reintroduction of the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA). UELMA will ensure that D.C.’s primary legal materials are preserved and available to the public in unaltered form.

UELMA was previously introduced as Bill 20-221 by former Committee chair Tommy Wells. The bill was received positively at the July 1, 2013 hearing, during which representatives from our organizations testified in support. UELMA requires that electronic legal material that has been designated official must be capable of being authenticated, preserved, and permanently accessible to the public. UELMA supports public participation in the democratic process and access to justice by ensuring the availability of basic legal materials and facilitates government transparency and accountability by enabling members of the public to more easily follow the workings of their government.

During his time as D.C. General Counsel, V. David Zvenyach developed an open source authentication solution that would meet UELMA’s authentication requirements. Representatives from AALL provided feedback on the system, which offers a low-cost solution to ensuring that D.C.’s official online legal materials have not been altered or tampered with since publication by the official publisher. Due to the work already accomplished, we believe meeting UELMA’s requirements would not be difficult for the District.

We urge you to introduce UELMA so that it may be considered once again by the Council. By adopting UELMA, D.C. will establish itself as a leader in understanding that official, electronic legal material must be authenticated, preserved, and made permanently available to the public. Thank you very much for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Emily Feltren  
Director of Government Relations  
AALL

Pamela Lipscomb  
President  
LLSDC