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June 16, 2020

Mr. Robert Lowney  
Chief, Court Services Office  
Administrative Office of the United States Courts  
One Columbus Circle NE  
Washington, DC 20544

**RE: Electronic Public Access Public User Group Meeting Summary and Recommendations**

Dear Mr. Lowney:

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), an organization representing 4,000 law librarians and legal information professionals, I write to provide comments in response to the recently published “Electronic Public Access (EPA) Public User Group Meeting Summary – February 2020.” AALL appreciates the opportunity to share the Association’s views on the Administrative Office of the U.S. Court’s (AO) upcoming initiatives and the EPA Public User Group’s recommendations.

Law librarians and legal information professionals regularly assist attorneys, law faculty, law students, and the public with accessing court records through the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system and with using the federal Judiciary’s Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) system. Due to our members’ interest in PACER, AALL has long supported the AO’s efforts to provide greater access to federal court records. For example, in 2011, AALL joined the AO and the U.S. Government Publishing Office to launch the [PACER: Access and Education Program](#), through which participating libraries may receive exemptions for the first \$50 of quarterly PACER charges in exchange for providing information about how to use PACER.

Law librarians and legal information professionals look forward to the launch of the new PACER.gov website, described in the February 2020 meeting notes. As the development of the website continues, AALL encourages the AO to enlist a wide cross-section of public and private sector experts—including law librarians and legal information professionals—to provide ideas and feedback about improvements that would benefit users. We also recommend that the AO include law librarians and legal information professionals in its upcoming user assessment.

AALL appreciates the EPA Public User Group’s recommendations for improving electronic public access services provided by the federal Judiciary. We are particularly



supportive of the recommendations to expand PACER's existing search capabilities, including developing more granular and flexible search parameters; to improve the PACER user experience, including allowing users to preview documents before paying; and to enhance access to PACER for self-represented litigants.

AALL also supports the EPA Public User Group's recommendation to establish the User Group as a standing body. We believe doing so would establish an important avenue for interested parties to engage with the AO on public access issues.

We hope our comments provide additional ideas as the AO considers improvements to PACER and its other electronic public access services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Cosby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Cosby  
President