

Contra Costa County Library Commission
Resolution on Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act

WHEREAS, Libraries are a critical force for promoting the free flow and unimpeded distribution of knowledge and information for individuals, institutions, and communities; and

WHEREAS, the Contra Costa County Library serves a diverse population, including citizens from other nations; and

WHEREAS, the Contra Costa County Library Commission holds that suppression of ideas undermines a democratic society; and

WHEREAS, Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association; and in a library, the subject of users' interests should not be examined or scrutinized by others; and

WHEREAS, the Contra Costa County Library Commission affirms its strong opposition to any form of terrorism against humanity and also affirms that any effort to end terrorism must not be waged at the expense of civil rights and liberties; and

WHEREAS, the Contra Costa County Library Commission believes that certain provisions of section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act expand the authority of the federal government to

- Obtain library records
- Secretly monitor electronic communication, and
- Prohibit libraries and librarians from informing users of such monitoring or information requests; and

WHEREAS, The USA PATRIOT Act increases the likelihood that the activities of library users may be under government surveillance without their knowledge or consent; and

WHEREAS, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and organizations such as the American Library Association and the California Library Association, have adopted resolutions expressing concern about the Act, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Contra Costa County Library Commission opposes the use of governmental power to suppress the free and open exchange of knowledge and information; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Contra Costa County Library Commission calls for the amendment of those provisions of section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act that the Commission believes violate fundamental rights and liberties guaranteed by the United State Constitution, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Contra Costa County Library Commission encourages the County Librarian to take steps to strengthen the Library's circulation and electronic systems and processes to further protect user privacy.

11/20/03
Date

Alan Smith, Chairperson
Contra Costa County Library Commission

