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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES' STATEMENT ON ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

CHICAGO, January 26, 2017—As the Trump Administration and 115th Congress begin, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) reasserts its commitment to advocating for access to government information, including legal information, as both an essential principle of a democratic society and a valuable public good.

“For more than 100 years, AALL has advocated for policies that strengthen access to government information, support our justice system, and ensure a strong democracy,” said AALL President Ronald E. Wheeler Jr. “As legal information professionals, law librarians rely on accurate, timely information to serve government officials, judges, the bar, legal scholars, and members of the public. We urge the new Administration and Congress to support an open and transparent government in which all people have access to official, trustworthy information produced by all three branches of government.”

Wheeler continued, “As James Madison once wrote, ‘A popular Government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.’”

AALL will continue to monitor information policy developments that hinder a transparent government, and we will speak out against threats to the public’s right to know.

AALL’s Public Policy Priorities for the 115th Congress include access to justice, balance in copyright, greater access to information, openness in government, and protection of privacy. The priorities are available at bit.ly/policypriorities115.

About AALL

The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) is the only national association dedicated to the legal information profession and its professionals. Founded in 1906 on the belief that people—lawyers, judges, students, and the public—need timely access to relevant legal information to make sound legal arguments and wise legal decisions, its nearly 4,500 members are problem solvers of the highest order. AALL fosters the profession by offering its members knowledge, leadership, and community that make the whole legal system stronger. For more information, visit www.aallnet.org.

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