



NCLIS

U.S. National Commission on
Libraries and Information Science

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News Release

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For Immediate Release (Re-release of NCLIS News Release of August 15, 2006 with clarification to correct the record of the Commission vote to oppose the draft proposal for the consolidation of NCLIS into IMLS.)

NCLIS Members Respond to IMLS Request for Comments

Commissioners Oppose Draft Plan Proposed by IMLS

Washington, DC, USA—August 17, 2006. Meeting in Washington, DC, members of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) responded to the request of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for comments about the draft proposal for the consolidation of NCLIS into IMLS. Voting at the August 14 NCLIS meeting, the Commission agreed to oppose the plan as described in the IMLS document by a vote of 11-1. Commissioner Jan Cellucci cast the single dissenting vote. (http://www.imls.gov/pdf/ConsolidationPlan_draft.pdf).

A major concern is the proposed plan's lack of reference to the Commission's statutory advisory and policy development role.

“In the legislation which created the Commission, our first responsibility is to advise the President and Congress on the implementation of policy with respect to library and information science,” said Commission Chair Beth Fitzsimmons. “We are surprised that this critical authority is given so little attention in the draft document. In fact, the Commission's advisory and policy development role is hardly mentioned. Instead, the primary emphasis in the plan is on the Commission's work with the National Center for Education Statistics in implementing the Library Statistics Cooperative Program, which is referred to as one of the Commission's ‘main functions.’ This is not the case.”

Noting that both the Commission's mission and a consolidation of NCLIS legislation are available on the NCLIS website ((<http://www.nclis.gov/about/mission.htm> and <http://www.nclis.gov/about/background/PublicLaws-Consolidation.pdf>), Dr. Fitzsimmons expressed disappointment with the inaccurate picture of the Commission's work presented in the proposed plan.

In recording their opposition, the Commissioners also stated their concern that “the proposed merger of the statistics, policy development, and funding programs” would compromise the integrity of the three activities, considered by the members of the Commission to be essential but separate programs. Likewise, the Commissioners were disturbed that the Commission’s responsibility for U.S. national library standards and its formal position in the standards community as a voting member of the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) would be eliminated. This role, pointed out by the American Library Association in its statement on the proposed merger, is not referred to in the draft proposal from IMLS.

Finally, the stated purpose of the consolidation, to provide “more efficient and effective delivery of public services” with respect to libraries and information science, is unrealized in the draft proposal, according to the members of the Commission.

The full text of the NCLIS motion is attached.

Comments about the draft plan are currently being solicited by IMLS (<http://www.ims.gov/news/2006/080206.shtm>). Interested parties should send comments by August 31 to:

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ABOUT NCLIS

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is a permanent, independent agency of the Federal government charged by Public Law 91-345 to advise the President and Congress on national and international library and information policies, to appraise and assess the adequacies and deficiencies of library and information resources and services, and to develop overall plans for meeting national library and information needs.

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A Motion to Record the Opposition of the Members of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) to the Proposed Consolidation, as described in the document, *Draft for Consolidation into IMLS of the Public and State Library Statistics Programs and of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science's Activities, July 2006*

Motion: The members of the Commission oppose the consolidation of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Library Statistics Cooperative Program, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as described in the document, *Draft for Consolidation into IMLS of the Public and State Library Statistics Programs and of the National Commission on Library and Information Science's Activities, July 2006*.

In recording their opposition to the proposed consolidation, the Commissioners state that the Commission was established with the enactment of Public Law 91-345 (20 U.S.C. 150) *et seq.*), signed July 20, 1970. The law includes the following statement of policy:

SEC. 2. The Congress hereby affirms that library and information services adequate to meet the needs of the people of the United States are essential to achieve national goals and to utilize most effectively the nation's educational resources and that the Federal Government will cooperate with State and local governments and public and private agencies in assuring optimum provision of such services.

In declaring their opposition to the proposed consolidation, the Commissioners state that it is the Commission's responsibility to develop and recommend plans that will enable the American people to have adequate library and information services. In carrying out this responsibility, the Commission is directed by law to advise the President and Congress on the implementation of national policy with respect to libraries and information science.

Therefore, the members of the Commission oppose the proposed consolidation, based on the following:

1. Under this plan, the 36-year non-partisan permanent statutory independence of the Commission and its essential policy development role is eliminated
2. The proposed merger of the statistics, policy development, and funding programs compromises the integrity of the programs
3. The Commission's statutory authority to advise the President and Congress on national and international policy with respect to library and information science is eliminated, as it is omitted in the draft document
4. As noted in the statement of the American Library Association on the Proposed Merger of NCLIS and IMLS, responsibility for U.S. national library standards, currently under the purview of NCLIS as it relates to PL 91-345, Section 5(a),3, 4, and 6 (July 20, 1970), and the formal relationship in the standards community as a voting member of the National Information Standards Organization (NISO) are eliminated, as they are omitted in the draft document
5. The purpose of the proposed consolidation, for a more efficient and effective delivery of public services, is unrealized in this proposal.