

May 18, 2016

United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Legislative Branch Subcommittee
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20541

Re: Opposition to Inclusion of Provision in Legislative Branch Appropriations Legislation Report

Dear Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Schatz, and Members of the Subcommittee:

We write today on behalf of the more than 58,000 members of the American Library Association and of the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS), a division of ALA. Our members are experts in cataloging and classification. We do so respectfully to ask that, when the Subcommittee meets to consider legislation appropriating funds for the Legislative Branch, the text of the bill not

subject headings. The Library reviews each change proposal individually and typically adopts over a thousand each year.

Indeed, the heading change issue was one of 90 such modifications proposed by the Library in March.

Code in an identical fashion until earlier this month. The catalog term "Cripples" similarly made no move to countermand those expert cataloging determinations at the time.

- x The Library reasonably and properly concluded in this instance that, when used in reference to people, the long-used terms "illegal" and "alien" have in recent decades acquired derogatory connotations, become pejorative, and been associated with nativist and racist sentiments.⁵ As the Library has noted, the Library since 1910 the Library since 1910 official use more than 35 years ago and time, and particularly in recent years, referring to undocumented persons (as opposed to forms of conduct) as "illegal" increasingly has been widely acknowledged as dehumanizing, offensive, inflammatory, and even a racial slur

This shift has been plain and pronounced as the Library observed, in precisely the kind of dynamic materials that cataloging standards require any Library to assess and evaluate the suitability of a subject heading in use and prospective modification. Indeed, in recent years many national news organizations (including the Associated Press, USA Today, ABC, Chicago Tribune, and Los Angeles Times) categorically have stopped using the word "illegal" to describe human beings as a matter of editorial policy

Moreover, the Pew Research Center has documented that actions were not merely anecdotal or aberrant in any way. To the contrary, Pew compared use of the term in U.S. newspapers during the same two week period in 1996, 2002, 2007 and 2013 (all times when immigration matters were much in the news) It found that use of that phrase declined precipitously over the most recent 6 year period surveyed, appearing in 21% of news reports in 2007 but just 5% in 2013 a 76% reduction in use and all-time low.⁶

We understand and appreciate the changes discussed above. In light of the foregoing, however, it is the view of our Association that, at minimum, the Library of Congress recent proposed reclassification 135.62 293.21 Tm [(h)-2(e)11(-)-m [(t)

We hope that the foregoing description of the standards and practices of our profession rigorously adhered to and unimpeachably applied by the Library of Congress in this case will assist the Subcommittee to respect the Library's independent professional cataloging determinations. Specifically, we urge you and all Members of the Subcommittee not to include any statutory or report language in the Senate's Legislative Branch appropriations bill that would countermand or and to oppose any other legislation that would have similar effect.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide the Subcommittee with a factual context in which to consider this matter. Please contact us should you or your staff have any questions or require any additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Sari Feldman, President
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Norm Medeiros, President,
Association for Library Collections
& Technical Services