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Letter to Jeff Sessions, January 25, 2008

Kenneth Hirsh

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January 25, 2008

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Office of Senator Jeff Sessions
335 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0104

Dear Senator Sessions:

On behalf of the Southeastern Association of Law Libraries (SEAALL), which includes Alabama’s law libraries, I am writing to ask you to lift your hold on the "Presidential Records Act Amendments of 2007" (H.R. 1255).

SEAALL is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in Florida with the purposes of promoting law librarianship and developing and increasing the usefulness of law libraries, particularly those in the Southeastern area of the United States. SEAALL is a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), a non-profit educational organization whose mission is to promote and enhance the value of law libraries to the legal and public communities, to foster the profession of law librarianship, and to provide leadership in the field of legal information and information policy.

The "Presidential Records Act Amendments of 2007" (H.R. 1255; S. 886) would reverse President Bush’s Executive Order 13233 by establishing a deadline for the review of records, limiting the authority of former presidents to withhold records, requiring the president to make privilege claims personally, and eliminating the ability for Vice Presidents to assert executive privilege claims over vice presidential records. The Act addresses issues central to AALL’s core values—specifically, our commitment to transparency in government, openness and accountability—which are crucial for democracy. In this case, presidential records facilitate important historical research, foster government accountability by the public, and provide access to important textual records necessary for a stable and civil society.

The bill has broad bipartisan support in the Senate, and it cleared the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee by voice vote earlier this year. SEAALL and AALL strongly support The Presidential Records Act Amendments of 2007 and request that you lift your hold on the bill.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Hirsh
President

www.aallnet.org/chapters/seaall