

# WASHINGTON HOTLINE



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**Video and Library Privacy Protection Act.** On October 4, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice reported out of subcommittee HR 4947, Video and Library Privacy Protection Act, accepting several FBI recommended amendments but refusing to give the Bureau a "national security letter" exemption to the court order standard in the bill. Such a letter from the FBI director or his designee would provide sufficient authority to obtain access to library patron records, and would exempt the FBI from having to obtain a court order. Subcommittee chair Rep. Robert Kastenmeier (D-WI) said he would not seek full committee or floor action on the bill.

Action immediately shifted to the Senate Judiciary Committee which met on October 5. Anticipating that a similar "national security letter" amendment would be offered at mark-up, the Judiciary Committee stripped the library portion of its version of the bill, S 2361, leaving the video privacy protection part intact and avoiding the national security amendment. The revised S 2361 was then reported out of Committee and passed by the Senate on October 14 without the national security letter amendment.

**NTIS.** The House on September 26 and the Senate on October 5 passed a compromise version of legislation (HR 4417) which specifies that basic functions and activities of the National Technical Information Service are to remain permanent federal functions and are not to be transferred or contracted out without prior congressional approval. Exceptions would be for equipment, marketing and promotional activities, and certain joint ventures. NTIS could use net revenues to modernize, and could hire without regard to personnel ceilings. Language was clarified to make sure that NTIS continues to contribute its products to the Depository Library Program. HR 4417 originally proposed to convert NTIS to a government corporation; this provision was dropped in a compromise among the various committees with jurisdiction.

**NEH Preservation grants.** The President signed HR 4867, the Interior Appropriations Bill, into law (PL 100-446) on September 27, with an \$8 million increase for the Office of Preservation at the National Endowment for the Humanities--from \$4.5 to \$12.5 million. The **deadline for applications** for this FY '89 money is **December 1**. The bulk of the funds will support brittle book microfilming projects, but a variety of other preservation activities are envisioned. Interested applicants from all types of libraries are urged to contact George Farr or Jeffrey Field at NEH, (202) 786-0570.

**Librarian of Congress.** On October 4, the Joint Committee on the Library met "to review reports by the Librarian of Congress on current and further plans and activities of the Library of Congress." New initiatives mentioned by Librarian James Billington include a pilot project to test the feasibility of online access to LC's bibliographic files; traveling exhibits on the Bicentennial of the Congress and the "States of the Nation;" an "American Memory" program to thematically package LC collections in formats such as optical disk and distribute them to libraries and schools; establishment of The Jeffersonians, a private advisory board to assist in increasing private financial support; and personnel program adjustments, including management changes, establishment of a Senior Executive Service, and improvements in the affirmative action area.

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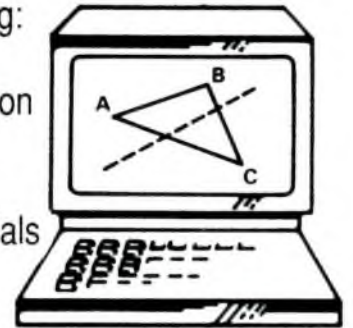
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