
Resolution in support of whistleblower Bradley Manning

- Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) Library Bill of Rights states that “Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas;”
- Whereas ALA is “the leading advocate for..the public’s right to a free and open information society” (ALA Policy A.1.3);
- Whereas ALA “opposes any use of governmental power to suppress the free and open exchange of knowledge and information or to intimidate individuals exercising free inquiry” (ALA Policy B.8.5.1);
- Whereas the Freedom to Read Foundation, the First Amendment legal defense organization affiliated with ALA, provided grants in support of the legal defense costs of whistleblowers Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony J. Russo, Jr., who were prosecuted for their role in the publication of the “Pentagon Papers,” which disclosed the official secret history of American involvement in Vietnam;
- Whereas in 2004 ALA passed a “Resolution on Securing Government Accountability through Whistleblower Protection” affirming its “support for accountable government and the role of whistleblowers in reporting abuse, fraud, and waste in governmental activities” (CD#20.7, 2004);
- Whereas in 2004 ALA passed “A Resolution Against the Use of Torture as a Violation of the American Library Association’s Basic Values” which resolved that ALA “condemns the use or threat of use of torture by the US government as a barbarous violation of human rights, intellectual freedom and the rule of law” (CD#59, 2004);
- Whereas in 2005 ALA passed a “Resolution on Disinformation, Media Manipulation and the Destruction of Public Information,” which placed ALA “on record as being opposed to the use by government of disinformation, media manipulation, the destruction and excision of public information, and other such tactics” (CD#64, 2005);

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Whereas in 2008 ALA passed a “Resolution Commending the FBI Whistleblower Who Exposed Abuses on the Use of Exigent National Security Letters,” which called on Congress to “protect the rights of whistleblowers against retaliation” (CD#20.5, 2008);

Whereas in 2010 ALA passed a “Resolution on Access to and Classification of Government Information,” which urged “Congress to pass legislation that expands protections for whistleblowers in the Federal government, such as the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2010” (CD#19.1, 2011);

Whereas Pfc. Bradley Manning has acknowledged transmitting classified materials to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks in 2010;

Whereas Bradley Manning currently faces charges, including aiding the enemy by indirect means, for transmitting that information;

Whereas following his arrest for that action, Bradley Manning was detained for eleven months in conditions characterized by the Center for Constitutional Rights as “torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment,” and by the United Nations special rapporteur on torture as “at a minimum, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in violation of article 16 of the Convention against Torture,”

Whereas the materials released by Bradley Manning contained important revelations regarding war crimes committed by U.S. military personnel and other cases of misconduct by U.S. military and governmental officials;

Whereas Bradley Manning explained in a private email message in 2010 that he was releasing the documents in order to provoke “worldwide discussion, debates, and reforms”;

Whereas Bradley Manning again explained in a pre-trial hearing in January 2013 that he had leaked the documents because he believed “that if the general public ... had access to the information ... this could spark a domestic debate as to the role of the military and foreign policy in general”; and

Whereas a conviction of Bradley Manning, especially under the Espionage Act, would have a chilling effect upon journalism and the climate of free expression in the United States; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA) opposes the prosecution of Bradley Manning.

Resolution defeated by ALA Council, 2 July 2013.

POLICY CITATIONS

ALA policy A.1.3.

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section1/1mission#A.1.3> Vision (Old Number 1.3)

ALA Policy B.8.5.1.

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/section2/52libsvcsandrespon#B.8.5.1>

CD#20.7, 2004.

<http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/wo/reference/colresolutions/PDFs/000002-CD20.7.pdf>

CD#59, 2004.

<http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=ifresolutions&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=70739>

CD#64, 2005.

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/ocrpdfofprm/52-8disinformation.pdf>

CD#20.5, 2008.

<http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/wo/reference/colresolutions/PDFs/COL%20Resolution%20on%20Ba.pdf>

CD#19.1, 2011.

<http://connect.ala.org/node/127452>