

# WASHINGTON HOTLINE



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**HEA II-D Regulations.** The long-awaited draft regulations and an application form for the new Higher Education Act II-D College Library Technology and Cooperation Grants were published in the March 21 *Federal Register*, pp. 9246-57. The deadline for applications is May 16. Call the Department of Education at 1-800-424-1616 for an application package if you do not have easy access to the *Federal Register*.

**Access Charges.** The Federal Communications Commission has decided to drop its proposal to impose access charges on enhanced service providers such as the major value-added networks. The FCC, which has not commented officially yet, will reportedly take the rare step of drafting a letter or order to confirm its decision to close CC Docket 87-215.

According to both *Communications Daily* and the *Wall Street Journal* of March 17, the action was taken in response to an announcement by House telecommunications subcommittee Chairman Edward Markey (D-MA) that he would introduce legislation to prohibit such access charges. *Communications Daily* said the FCC proposal generated a "firestorm of controversy," and noted the opposition from libraries, among others. Libraries would have paid an estimated \$4.47 per hour in added costs to access remote databases under the proposal, which was said to have generated the most mail to the FCC ever on a telephone issue.

**National Technical Information Service.** Commerce Secretary C. William Verity opposes plans by the Office of Management and Budget to contract out the functions of the National Technical Information Service, according to Washington news reports. Both Chairman Doug Walgren (D-PA) and ranking minority member Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) expressed opposition to contracting out NTIS at a February 24 hearing by the House Science, Research, and Technology Subcommittee. House and Senate prohibitions against further NTIS contracting out are still tied to final action on the HR 3 trade bill.

**Freedom of Information Day.** Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) gave a stirring defense of freedom of speech and the Freedom of Information Act as the keynote speaker at a press conference sponsored by ALA to mark March 16 as Freedom of Information Day. ALA released a new media "starter kit" on government information containing a cumulation of ALA "Less Access..." chronologies and statements from some of the 43 organizational members of the ALA-developed Coalition on Government Information. The event was chaired by COGI Chair Nancy Kranich of New York University Libraries.

Other speakers included Muriel Spence, who with John Shattuck (both of Harvard University) had written a paper, "Government Information Controls: Implications for Scholarship, Science and Technology," recently released by the Association of American Universities. Other speakers included Scott Armstrong of the National Security Archive and Michael Pertschuk of the Advocacy Institute, which issued an editorial memorandum discussing the significance of FOI Day (cosigned by ALA). Pertschuk summed up by saying a year-long campaign is needed to ensure that a year from now freedom of information is a reality, not just a promise.