

Letter to Congressman Coble

January 30, 1998

The Honorable Howard Coble, Chairman (R-NC)
House Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property
2239 RHOB
Washington, DC 20515-3306

Dear Congressman Coble:

As in our letter to you of October 29, 1997, the American Statistical Association (ASA) is grateful for the opportunity to comment for the record on H.R. 2652 - the Collections of Information Antipiracy Act. We applaud your continuing concern with both the public and scientific access to high quality data and also suitable protection of database intellectual property in an age of increasing technological possibilities of piracy.

As an affiliated society of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), we have endorsed that body's Statement on Intellectual Property Protection for Databases. It is posted on the web at <http://www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/sfrl/aaasdb.htm>. Our letter and endorsing Statement are enclosed. In them, we stress concerns about potential unintended consequences for the practice of statistics and, indeed, of scientific and engineering analysis generally. A perception that new legislation may make certain types of statistical and other analyses litigiously risky could have a seriously chilling effect on our profession. It could also endanger the role of science and engineering as contributors to the technology engine which is so powerfully propelling our economy. Among other applications, statistical methods are crucial to scientific and engineering research.

The ASA is the largest statistical association in the world with approximately 18,000 members. Our members are leading professionals in statistical analysis throughout science and engineering, in policy analysis, economics, sports statistics, biomedical research and public health, marketing, and political polling. In short, there is no aspect of American life, business, or policy which does not benefit from the high quality of statistical professionalism promoted by ASA. Our work depends both on access to sound databases and on the right to analyze them.

Yours truly,

David S. Moore
1998 President
American Statistical Association

Enclosure

cc: List attached

Courtesy Copy List

Members of the House Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property

The Honorable Jim Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-WI)

The Honorable Elton Gallegly (R-CA)

The Honorable Robert W. Goodlatte (R-VA)

The Honorable Edward A. Pease (R-IN)

The Honorable Christopher B. Cannon (R-UT)

The Honorable Bill McCollum (R-FA)

The Honorable Charles T. Canady (R-FA)

The Honorable Barney Frank, Ranking Minority (D-MA)

The Honorable John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI)

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The Honorable George E. Brown, Jr., Ranking Minority (D-CA)

House Science Committee

The Honorable John McCain, Chairman (R-AZ)

Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings, Ranking Minority (D-SC)

Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch, Chairman (R-UT)

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Ranking Minority (D-VT)

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

The Honorable John Ashcroft (R-MO)

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

John H. Gibbons

Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, and Director, Office of Science
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Marybeth Peters

Register of Copyrights and Associate Librarian of Congress for Copyright Services,
Library of Congress

American Association for the Advancement of Science

William A. Wulf, Vice Chairman, National Research Council