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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

October 13, 2009

MICHAEL L. ALEXANDER, STAFF DIRECTOR  
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Mr. Carl Malamud  
President and CEO  
Public.Resource.Org  
1005 Gravenstein Highway North  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Dear Mr. Malamud:

Thank you for your letter of October 5<sup>th</sup> on Public.Resource.Org's intentions to write a study on creating Law.gov, a website to serve as a registry and repository of American law. I am particularly glad to see that this study will include key stakeholders in compiling recommendations, including receiving input from law professors from across the country.

Increasing access to primary legal information is a critical goal, and this Committee has worked for years to make progress in this area. Key provisions of the E-Government Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-347) were designed to increase public access to court information and records while ensuring proper privacy protections. As a result of the Act we have seen many steps to increase online legal information. Earlier this year the Judicial Conference of The United States certified that each Federal Court has met the requirement to maintain a website with key information relating to the court.

Despite this progress, I continue to have concerns that critical legal information remains inaccessible or difficult to access. The Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) system, still charges \$.08 a page for access, despite a mandate in the E-Government Act to move to a system where this information would be freely available to the greatest extent possible. Much of the information on PACER - including court opinions - that are technically free of charge, remain inaccessible by commercial search engines and other tools that would ensure greater distribution.

Given the importance of these unresolved issues and the vast potential benefits of increased public access, I accept your offer to submit a copy of the final report on Law.gov to this Committee. I look forward to reviewing it when completed.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph I. Lieberman  
Chairman