

February 15, 2001

Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

RE: [CC Docket No. 96-45, FCC 01-31] Federal-State Joint Board on
Universal Service

Dear Ms. Salas:

The following comments from the Livonia Public Library, a system of three full-service library facilities serving a population of 100,850 in southeast Michigan, relate to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rule Making regarding the Children's Internet Protection (CHIP) Act.

We would respectfully ask that an exception to the CHIP Act be considered for federal depository libraries. The Livonia Civic Center Library, which is the main branch of the Livonia Public Library, is a partial federal depository library and as such serves not only the immediate community of Livonia, but also a number of neighboring cities and townships. The policy guidelines of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) state the ". . . information products in the FDLP Electronic Collection must be available to any library user free of fees or other restrictions such as age or residency status." This statement is contrary to what the CHIP legislation would mandate. Under the CHIP Act, minors would not have unrestricted access to government documents in electronic format. Additionally, those adults who wished to have such access would need to request that filtering be disabled--an action that many would find annoying if not intrusive of their right to privacy.

In light of continuing decreases in appropriations to the Government Printing Office (13% in the past five years), the GPO has initiated actions to accelerate the on-going transition of the FDLP to a more electronic basis. It would be unfortunate if federal depository libraries were forced to restrict on-line access to government documents at a time when more and more of these documents are being produced only in electronic format. The strength of American democracy has always been its informed citizenry and the pride of American democracy has been the free and open access that the public has to government information.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed rules and for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Barbara Lewis
City Librarian
Livonia Public Library