

JOINT STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF RAPID RATIFICATION OF THE MARRAKESH TREATY

The undersigned organizations strongly support the prompt ratification by the United States of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled (the Marrakesh Treaty). We urge the Senate to swiftly provide its consent to ratification of the treaty, and both the House and the Senate to pass the Marrakesh Implementation Act as proposed by the Administration without amendments, and with the recommended legislative history as a core interpretation tool.

We support ratification of the Treaty as critical in improving access to published works for the blind, visually impaired and those otherwise print disabled regardless of where they live in the world. We believe the Treaty is consistent with United States law and could be ratified without any changes to existing statutes or regulations.

Notwithstanding this view, we are prepared to support the legislative package as proposed by the Administration because it makes minimal changes to the law and its consideration would, we trust, facilitate early Senate consent to ratification. We are confident that the focused and narrow changes that have been proposed are enough to satisfy the terms of the Marrakesh Treaty. We believe any effort to make any other changes in US law, beyond those proposed by the Administration, would unnecessarily delay and jeopardize the ratification of this treaty.

Blind and otherwise print disabled Americans have waited far too long for equal access to printed materials. We call upon the Senate to consent to ratification without any reservations, understandings or declarations. We further encourage Congress to hold hearings expeditiously and to enact the implementing legislation along with the suggested legislative history as currently drafted, without delay. If the Treaty is ratified and the legislation adopted, the blind and otherwise print disabled of our nation will benefit greatly by having access to the rest of the world's accessible book collection and the blind and otherwise print disabled of the world will advance their quest for greater information through access to books in the United States.

This Treaty is long overdue. We call upon Congress and the President to end the book famine for the blind and print disabled now!

The following organizations join this statement:

Association of College and Research Libraries

Association of Research Libraries

American Council of the Blind

American Foundation for the Blind

American Library Association

Benetech

Center for Democracy and Technology

Chief Officers of State Library Agencies

Creative Commons USA

Electronic Frontier Foundation

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Federation of the Blind

Open Society Policy Center

Perkins School for the Blind

Public Knowledge

The Harry Potter Alliance