

1993

# National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (1990-1991): Memorandum 02

Sandy Crary

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M E M O R A N D U M

March 2, 1993

TO: Bill Gilcher  
FROM: Sandy Crary  
RE: National Commission on Libraries

The National Commission on Libraries is an independent agency that is supposed to advise BOTH the Executive and Legislative branches on library and information policy. It was established in 1970 during the Nixon Administration as a "non-partisan, permanent, independent agency." Its main function over the last 23 years has been to administer the two White House Conferences on Library and Information Services - one held in 1979 and one in 1991.

I want to point out some current issues that the Clinton Administration should be aware of and perhaps take action on. The chief among these issues is the continuing service of Mr. J. Michael Farrell as Chairman of the Commission. He was appointed by President Bush in October 1990 for a term to expire on July 19, 1992. Bush subsequently named Farrell as Chairman of the Commission in March 1992. Charles Reid, another Bush appointee, had been serving as Chairman and no reason was ever given for replacing him with Farrell. The law requires the President to name a member of the 15 member Commission as its Chairman.

Farrell's term on the Commission was a short one because he was appointed to fill out the term of a member who resigned. A regular term is 5 years. Farrell is allowed to sit as a member until he is replaced OR until "July 19 of the year succeeding the year in which the member's appointed term of office shall expire. So in other words he can sit as a member of the Commission until July 19, 1993 unless replaced in the meantime. Charles Reid's regular term continues into 1993.

Farrell is not a friend to the library community. The American Library Association would welcome his dismissal as Chairman and the reinstatement of Charles Reid as an interim Chairman until the President appoints a new one. Reid's reinstatement would also have the full support of Bessie B. Moore, a former NCLIS member from Arkansas, library leader and **close** friend to Bill Clinton.

Farrell has been planning to testify at a March 9th hearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education (Congressman Natcher). Farrell is also about to send out 2000 copies of a report over his signature called PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE to Congress, governors, all agencies and the American Library Association. Perhaps this document could be held back until a new chair is in place.