

1989

Library Services and Construction Act: Reauthorization (1989-1994): Report 08

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WASHINGTON OFFICE:
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To: Sandy Cray

From: Carol

Date: 9/13/89

This is referred
to you for the
following
purpose:

- Immediate attention
- Information
- Re your memo or letter
- Per your request

Comments:

Here is some general
background about the
contracting out of federal
libraries which may help
to show why we
concerned ~~about~~ about
the Ed Dept library, &
support the Owen's Amendment
on the House LSCA bill

STATUS OF FEDERAL LIBRARIES

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-76, "Performance of Commercial Activities," establishes federal policy regarding the operation of commercial activities and requires federal agencies to conduct cost comparisons to determine the most economical way to perform commercial activities--by private commercial source or in-house, using government facilities and personnel. Library services and facility operation, and cataloging are among the examples of such activities listed in the circular. Since 1984, libraries have been on an OMB list of functions targeted for A-76 review throughout the federal government. Agencies can also contract out functions with 10 or fewer employees without first conducting cost comparison studies, making libraries doubly vulnerable.

Since 1983 when the impetus to contract out commercial activities gained momentum, a number of federal libraries have been turned over to the private sector for operation. An accurate count is difficult. Members of ALA's Federal Librarians Round Table have relied on the Federal Register and Commerce Business Daily to keep tabs on commercial activity reviews, but this is often hit or miss.

As far as we know, the Office of Management and Budget does not maintain detailed information about how many of the approximately 2400 federal libraries have been contracted out. In response to an information request by Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) in 1987, OMB requested data from 23 of the largest departments and agencies which have 1,965 libraries. A total of 78 libraries were contracted out. OMB had no data on the numbers of support services contracts in which libraries have some functions provided by contract, but the management of the library remains with the government.

That several major federal libraries are run by a foreign-owned company has brought protests from Members of Congress and ALA. Aspen Systems Corporation is a subsidiary of the Wolters Samson Group of The Netherlands. The following are some of the federal libraries which have been contracted out:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Year</u>
Census Bureau	Labat-Anderson	1987
Department of Energy	Informatics	1983
	LSSI	1986
Department of Housing and Urban Development	Aspen Systems Corp.	1983
Department of Labor	Aspen Systems Corp.	1988
Environmental Protection Agency (Hdqrs)	Labat-Anderson	1986
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Hdqrs)	Labat-Anderson	1987
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	Aspen Systems Corp.	1988

Currently under A-76 review are the libraries of the Departments of Education and Interior, and the General Services Administration.