

September 26, 2008

RE: S. 2913, the "Shawn Bentley Orphan Works Act of 2008"

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Library Copyright Alliance, we are writing in strong support of the "Shawn Bentley Orphan Works Act of 2008." S. 2913, once enacted, will greatly help to make cultural heritage more broadly available to the public. We ask for your support of this important legislation.

The special collections in our libraries, museums, state and local historical societies, and archives are deep and rich in our Nation's cultural and scientific heritage. These collections include significant amounts of orphan works, works whose owners are difficult or impossible to locate. These repositories with orphan works are not being made publicly available for fear of copyright owners coming forward and demanding unknown amounts of compensation. Despite extensive and costly searches to locate orphan work owners, without a legislative solution, the risk remains too high for our institutions to make these works publicly available.

Resolving the orphan works problem presents significant new educational opportunities because these works will be publicly accessible and available to students, faculty and the public. Access to these resources supports and inspires new scholarship by making the works of previous generations more accessible and useful to current users.

S. 2913 has been carefully crafted to reflect the interests of many constituencies including libraries. Thank you in advance for considering support of S. 2913, the "Shawn Bentley Orphan Works Act of 2008."

Sincerely,

American Library Association

Association of Research Libraries

American Association of Law Libraries

Medical Library Association

Special Libraries Association