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James D. Crawford
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Executive Director

November 26, 2001

Michael S. Schwoyer, Esquire
Chief Counsel
House Judiciary Committee
PA House of Representatives
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: HOUSE BILL 110

Dear Mr. Schwoyer:

Thank you for inviting me to testify at Wednesday's hearing on House Resolution 110 regarding the publication of legal notices. Unfortunately, my schedule does not permit me to testify in person. I am submitting this letter and ask that it be made part of the record.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania is encouraged by the fact that the Judiciary Committee is studying the issue of publication of legal notices particularly with regard to proceedings before legislative and administrative bodies. The ACLU is supportive of open government and believes that much more can be done to provide citizens with greater access to information about how their government works and decisions that are being made by elected officials.

We recognize that newspapers play an important role in notifying the public about judicial, legislative and administrative proceedings. We believe that much of the information on such proceedings that is published in newspapers can also be disseminated via the Internet, computers and other electronic means. We think that a good deal of the public would find it far easier to access such information if it was readily available on computers located in their homes, businesses and public libraries.

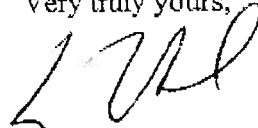
We know an increasing number of citizens are going "on-line" to keep abreast of events that they care about. It is quite timely for the Commonwealth and political subdivisions to look at ways they can avail themselves of advances in electronic communications.

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At the same time, in order for all citizens to have access to electronic publication of legal notices, it will become more critical for the Commonwealth to make sure that all public libraries are equipped with Internet access and that such access is truly available. If electronic publication becomes an option for providing notice (and we hope that it will), then consideration should be given to providing libraries with sufficient resources so that they can remain open at nights and on weekends. It may also mean that careful thought be given to ensure that patrons are not hindered in their use of the Internet by unnecessary rules and regulations.

Once again, thank you for soliciting our input on this manner. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions about our views.

Very truly yours,



Larry Frankel
Executive Director