

Association of Boston Law Librarians, Inc.

June 15, 2015

On behalf of the Association of Boston Law Librarians, Inc. (ABLL), I, Robert P. DeFabrizio, Esq., am pleased to provide my comments to the Trial Court Public Access to Court Records Committee (Committee) regarding access to court case records on the Internet.

ABLL includes over 100 members from Boston area law firms, law schools, federal and state agencies, as well as businesses. As outlined in its Mission Statement, ABLL exists “to develop and increase the usefulness of law libraries and other informational resources and services relating to the practice of law in the greater Boston area.”

My comments will focus on the new online docket system’s effects on private law libraries (law firms and businesses), the core segment of ABLL’s membership.

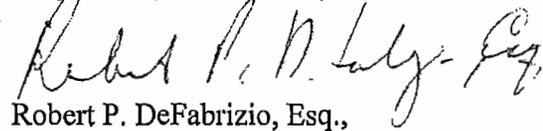
Until the recent roll out of the Massachusetts Trial Court Attorney Portal, private law librarians had access to all court dockets. ABLL contends that access should be reinstated for the following reasons:

1. We Are Respected Team Members. Private law librarians are recognized members of the legal profession – possessing a combination of education and experience commensurate with the high standards of the practice of law.
2. We Are Managed and Supervised by Attorneys. As employees, private law librarians are bound by the same rules of professional conduct as the attorneys they work for.
3. We Are Trusted Professionals. Private law librarians are entrusted with client and firm confidentiality. We are adept in balancing privacy concerns with those of our attorneys’ information needs.
4. Our Access Reduces Burden on the Courts. Reinstating access will lessen the need for in-person access and calls to the court, benefiting an already budget-strained court system.

As noted in the *Massachusetts Trial Court Strategic Plan, June 2013* (at pg. 13), “The public expects better service and more self-service...” The retrieval of docket information is part of many private law librarians’ job descriptions. We access federal and state docket systems throughout the country on a daily basis. Although balancing the dual interests of public access and privacy is a challenge, private law librarians have proven to be a group of professionals who have a long history of prudent, responsible practices.

I would like to thank the Committee for holding this hearing and affording ABLL the opportunity to testify. ABLL welcomes the opportunity to assist the Committee and encourages further discussion regarding access and enhancements to the Court's docket system.

Respectively submitted by,



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President

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