October 2, 2002

Dear Congressmen Boucher and Doolittle:

On behalf of the member universities of the Association of American Universities, I write to commend you for introducing the “Digital Media Consumers’ Rights Act of 2002” (DMCRA). This legislation will make critically needed adjustments to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act that will restore the longstanding balance in copyright law between the interests of producers and users of copyrighted material.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act was passed five years ago with the intent of conforming copyright law to the digital environment. It is now apparent that the impact of key provisions of that legislation has been to diminish the scope of fair use and other important limitations and exceptions to the proprietary rights of copyright owners. The DMCRA restores those exemptions to their prior scope, thereby rebalancing the dual public purpose of copyright law to encourage the creation and dissemination of creative works and to facilitate access to and use of those works for the benefit of society and its citizens.

As both producers and users of information, universities have a strong interest in maintaining the historic balance of copyright law. The carefully crafted provisions of the DMCRA will restore the ability of university students and faculty to make non-infringing uses of copyrighted works while protecting the proprietary rights of copyright owners.

Congressman Boucher has been a strong supporter of university research and education programs throughout his Congressional career. With this legislation, Congressmen Boucher and Doolittle strengthen the capacity for universities to sustain vigorous programs of research and education in the digital age. We are grateful for their leadership in this important area.

Sincerely,

John C. Vaughn