May 30, 2013

Hon. David Ralston
Speaker of the House
Georgia House of Representatives
332 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Mr. Wayne R. Allen, Legislative Counsel
Office of Legislative Counsel
Georgia General Assembly
3021 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Speaker Ralston and Mr. Allen:

I am pleased to enclose for your consideration a George Washington USB Thumb Drive containing a scanned version of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated as well as XML–encoded versions of the code. Our purpose in making these statutes available is to promote access to the law by citizens and to promote innovation in ways the statutes are made available so that public servants, members of the bar, citizens, and members of the business community have ready access to the laws that govern them.

Access to the law is a fundamental aspect of our system of democracy, an essential element of due process, equal protection, and access to justice. The Supreme Court of the United States has repeatedly reaffirmed this principle, stating for example in Banks v. Manchester (128 U.S. 244, 1888) that "the authentic exposition and interpretation of the law, which, binding every citizen, is free for publication to all, whether it is a declaration of unwritten law, or an interpretation of a constitution or a statute."

The fact that there is no copyright in the law has been affirmed as a statement of policy by the United States Copyright Office which stated "Edicts of government, such as judicial opinions, administrative rulings, legislative enactments, public ordinances, and similar official legal documents are not copyrightable for reasons of public policy. This applies to such works whether they are Federal, State, or local as well as to those of foreign governments."

I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have and look forward to better access to the law by the citizens of Georgia.

Sincerely yours,


Carl Malamud
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