TO: ALA Executive Board

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
The Board is asked to approve revised Guidelines for Campaigning by Candidates for ALA Office.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
Keith Michael Fiels, ALA Executive Director

CONTACT PERSON:
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DRAFT OF MOTION:
Move to approve the revised Guidelines for Campaigning by Candidates for ALA Office contained in 2007-2008 EBD #12.31(revised).

DATE: October 21, 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
A series of recommendations for ALA election campaigns was approved by Council in 1992 and continues to govern the nominations and election process.

The following guidelines were developed as directed by Council and reflect the 1992 Council resolutions, other applicable ALA financial policies and the recommendations of the Special Committee on the Election Process, and are intended only to outline procedures within these policies. They provide information on organizational support provided to all candidates for ALA office, use of ALA funds to promote an individual's candidacy, vendor support, endorsements, and campaign materials.

The 1992 document stated that "These guidelines are intended to insure, insofar as possible, that there is equality of opportunity for all members of the American Library Association to seek elected office regardless of their personal financial resources or their access to organizational or other financial support." This principle has been consistently applied as the original guidelines were developed, and as they have been modified in the ensuing years.
The guidelines have been reviewed on a periodic basis as specific issues have arisen and as the impact of electronic communication technologies have prompted a reexamination of existing procedures. The document was most recently revised in June 2003.

The proposed revisions in the guidelines are designed to further clarify the issue of endorsements of candidates for ALA office. Sections updated in this 2007 document are in *italics*.

*The following documents formed the basis for these guidelines:*

1991-92 CD #33
2003-2004 EBD #12.2
2003-2004 EBD #12.12.2
Guidelines for Campaigning by Candidates for ALA Office

Background:

In 1988, Council approved a Resolution on Promoting Voting in American Library Association Elections. The resolution was prompted by concern over the low levels of voting participation by ALA members in the 1987 election. In response to Council’s action, the Executive Board convened a Special Committee on the Election Process to review the election process and to prepare recommendations on new or revised election policies as needed. The Special Committee was asked to address issues including the timing of the elections process; the costs of campaigning for ALA office, the appropriate sources for campaign funds and possible limits on campaign expenses; methods of publicizing the elections and increasing the visibility of candidates; methods of increasing member participation in elections; guidelines with respect to such matters as candidate appearances at chapter and affiliate meetings, preparation and distribution of campaign brochures, buttons, etc; and endorsements, both formal and informal, by ALA units.

The Special Committee conducted an extensive review of the historical record, held discussion with ALA members and observers, and investigated practices of other associations of comparable size and scope. At the 1991 Midwinter Meeting, Council referred the Special Committee’s report to the Executive Board to bring back a set of recommendations for Council action. The Executive Board’s Administrative Subcommittee in turn referred the report to the Board’s Directions and Program Review Subcommittee, which presented its final report and recommendations on the election process to Council at the 1992 Annual Conference [1991-92 CD#33]. Council approved some of the recommendations and did not approve others.

The following Guidelines are based on the principle expressed in the 1992 document of assuring equality of opportunity for all candidates:

"These guidelines are intended to insure, insofar as possible, that there is equality of opportunity for all members of the American Library Association to seek elected office regardless of their personal financial resources or their access to organizational or other financial support."

Recommendation #8 in the final report of the Special Committee on the Election Process addressed the question of financial support to candidates as follows:

"The Association should encourage candidates to use good judgment in their use of financial and other resources available to them in conducting their campaigns. Soliciting or accepting campaign contributions is expressly discouraged. Guidelines for Campaign Finances for Candidates for President-Elect and Treasurer are included in this report."

Council did not approve this recommendation, but instead voted a substitute recommendation:

"That financial guidelines be developed and coordinated with the recommendations approved by Council."
Council also approved Recommendation #5, which specified that:

“The Office of the Executive Director shall prepare an election guide for candidates, listing available ALA services and other helpful information”

Support currently provided to candidates for ALA President and Treasurer:

Following the recommendations that Council approved in 1992, all candidates for ALA President and Treasurer currently receive the following support from ALA and its units:

- A press release issued by ALA/PIO announcing the candidates.
- A link on the ALA web site to a web page maintained by the candidate, as well as a link on the ALA election page with the candidates’ photo and bio.
- Rosters, mailing labels or email addresses for members listed in the *ALA Handbook of Organization* provided at no cost, subject to member communication preferences.
- Additional mailing or electronic distribution lists or labels for the membership or individual divisions or round tables provided at a 50% discount.
- Meeting rooms at the Midwinter Meeting preceding the election to hold campaign-related strategy meetings or social events, provided at no cost. The candidate must pay for food, beverages, meeting supplies or other charges.
- An Association-wide candidates forum held at the ALA Midwinter Meeting preceding the election,
- The publication of full-page candidate’s statements in the March issue of *American Libraries*.
- A candidate’s statement of no more than 150 words that is included in the ballot mailing to all members.

Support currently provided to candidates for ALA Council:

Following the recommendations that Council approved in 1992, all candidates for ALA Councilor-at-Large currently receive the following support from ALA and its units:

- A candidate’s statement of no more than 150 words that is included in the ballot mailing to all members,
- A listing of candidates’ names, positions and organizational affiliations published in *American Libraries*

Use of ALA funds to support the campaigns of individual candidates:

Other than the support provided as specified above, no ALA funds may be used to support the campaign of any individual candidate for ALA office. ALA policy defines ALA funds as funds of all offices, divisions and round tables. This includes use of budgeted funds for mailings or production of campaign materials, or use of staff time to support the candidacy of any individual candidate for ALA office.
Campaign Finances:

The letter of instruction currently provided to ALA candidates for President and Treasurer says:

“ALA currently has no policies regarding the financing of campaigns. There are no limits on the amount of money a candidate may spend, on the ways in which candidates choose to finance their campaigns, on whether candidates may raise money for their campaigns, or on the ways in which they choose to spend campaign funds they have raised.

ALA does not provide direct financial support for travel, materials, mailings, publicity or other campaign expenses.”

Vendor Support:

While Council did not adopt specific guidelines for support provided by vendors, the 1992 draft Guidelines also remain the basis for current practice with regard to vendor support:

“Campaign contributions by vendors, either in cash or in kind, have the potential of seriously skewing the election process. Candidates should avoid such contributions; vendors should be encouraged to make financial contributions to recognized ALA endowments and special funds previously established to receive these.”

Travel:

The letter of instruction currently provided to ALA candidates for President and Treasurer says:

“ALA does not provide funding for candidate travel during the campaign. All travel arrangements and expenses are the responsibility of the candidate.”

Endorsements:

The principle as stated in the 1992 Council guidelines is to guarantee “equality of opportunity for all members of the American Library Association to seek elected office regardless of their personal financial resources or their access to organizational or other financial support” and to insure that no candidate is given an advantage by receiving a higher level of support from the Association or its units. Endorsement by an ALA unit or officer constitutes organizational support not available to all candidates, and therefore violates this principle.

Endorsements by ALA units:

ALA units may not endorse candidates. For informational purposes, many divisions and round tables publish lists of all of the members of that division or round table who are running for ALA office.

Endorsements by individuals:

Individuals who are elected officers of the Association or its units or the ALA Executive Board are considered official representatives of the Association or unit and are presumed to be speaking as official representatives. Therefore, they may not endorse candidates.

Individuals who are appointed committee chairs or are members of committees may endorse candidates, and may use ALA electronic discussion lists to express their support for individual candidate or candidates for ALA offices, as long as they do not use their official titles or create an impression that they are speaking on behalf of a unit or committee.
Campaign materials:

The letter of instruction currently provided to ALA candidates for President and Treasurer says:

“ALA currently has no policies regarding campaign materials. The types, numbers, and distribution of such materials are generally left to the discretion of each candidate. At the ALA Midwinter Meeting, a table in the convention center will be provided to each candidate to display campaign materials.”