TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Report on Washington Office Activities

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
For information purposes. No actions requested.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
No action requested.

CONTACT PERSON:
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DRAFT OF MOTION:
None

DATE:
September 26, 2014

BACKGROUND:
The report provides information on recent ALA Washington Office initiatives and projects from OITP and OGR.

Attachments: Executive Board Report on Washington Office Activities
WASHINGTON OFFICE NEWS

Presidential Contender Sen. Jim Webb, FCC Leaders Address ALA Annual Conference

During this year’s “Washington Office Update” program at the 2014 ALA Annual Conference, former Virginia Senator Jim Webb discussed the upcoming national election season and the ways that the elections will affect libraries and library funding. Called a “potential presidential candidate” by The Washington Post, Sen. Webb has been a combat Marine, a counsel in Congress, an Assistant Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Navy, an Emmy-award winning journalist, an accomplished filmmaker and an author of ten books.

Just prior to Sen. Webb’s address, the Washington Office secured a video from Tom Wheeler, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In the video, the Chairman speaks about the changing nature of libraries today, emphasizing the importance of providing access to digital resources, technology, and free public Wi-Fi. Finally, Gigi Sohn, special counsel for External Affairs to Chairman Wheeler, met with PLA leadership, representatives from COSLA, ARSL, the OITP Advisory Committee, and the ALA E-rate task force to discuss E-rate details and the nature of library services in today’s and tomorrow’s libraries. In addition to these meetings, Gigi Sohn took a field trip to the main library of the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, where she saw a model of what libraries can offer their communities.

Net Neutrality Activities

In June, Vermont State Librarian Martha Reid voiced the concerns of our nation’s libraries about the importance of an open Internet at a U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary field hearing. Also in June, the ALA rallied librarians to support the Online Competition and Consumer Choice Act of 2014, a bill that would prohibit paid prioritization over the Internet. In July, ALA, along with other library and higher education organizations representing thousands of colleges, universities, and libraries nationwide, released a set of net neutrality principles to inform the Federal Communications Commission’s decision to protect the openness of the Internet. The principles describe how network neutrality protections are essential to protecting freedom of speech, educational achievement, and economic growth. In mid-September, ALA and the Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT) urged the FCC in a letter to adopt strong, enforceable net neutrality rules essential to preserving freedom of speech, educational achievement and economic growth online. In the letter to the FCC, the organizations call for the FCC to set the bar higher than the “commercially reasonable” standard the agency had proposed—whether using Title II for reclassification or Section 706 of the Communications Act, for a standard of Internet reasonableness to preserve the open nature of the Internet.

Media Interest in Washington

In August, ALA President Courtney Young appeared on Comcast Newsmakers, a national interview program that airs on the Headline News (HLN) network. Highlighting new data from the 2014 Digital Inclusion Survey, Young discussed the plethora of digital learning opportunities available in libraries and detailed the ways that 21st century libraries have transformed into high-tech classrooms for young students and adult learners nationwide. In October, The Washington
Post highlighted the library community’s efforts to protect the public from government intrusion or censorship in the feature article “Librarians won’t stay quiet about government surveillance.”
OFFICE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY (OITP)

ALA launches educational 3D printing policy campaign

In September, ALA announced the launch of “Progress in the Making,” a new educational campaign that will explore the public policy opportunities and challenges of 3D printer adoption by libraries. The association released “Progress in the Making: An Introduction to 3D Printing and Public Policy,” a tip sheet that provides an overview of 3D printing, describes a number of ways libraries are currently using 3D printers, outlines the legal implications of providing the technology, and details ways that libraries can implement simple yet protective 3D printing policies in their own libraries. Over the next coming months, ALA will release a white paper and a series of tip sheets that will help the library community better understand and adapt to the growth of 3D printers, specifically as the new technology relates to intellectual property law and individual liberties.

ALA Welcomes Forward Movement on E-Rate Modernization

In July, the FCC voted to release the first Order as part of its E-rate modernization proceeding. ALA President Courtney Young released a statement, saying that the Order represents a solid first step toward increasing library participation in the E-rate program and moving our communities toward the gigabit speeds increasingly needed to support Wi-Fi, digital learning and multimedia collections. In September, ALA submitted comments to the FCC on the Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FNPRM) that accompanied the July E-rate Order.

Nearly 100 Percent of Libraries Offer Tech Training and Workforce Programs, Study Finds

According to a new study, released in July 2014, from the ALA, nearly 100 percent of America’s public libraries offer workforce development training programs, online job resources, and technology skills training. Overall, libraries report technology improvements—including nearly ubiquitous public Wi-Fi, growing mobile resources and a leap in e-book access—but the ALA’s 2014 Digital Inclusion Survey also documents digital differences among states and an urban/rural divide. The Digital Inclusion Survey is managed by the ALA Office of Research and Statistics; OITP is a partner of the research project.

Over-Filtering in Schools and Libraries Harms Education, New ALA Report Finds

Schools and libraries nationwide are routinely filtering internet content far more than what the Children’s Internet Protection Act requires, according to “Fencing Out Knowledge: Impacts of the Children’s Internet Protection Act 10 Years Later,” a report released by the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) and the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) in June. “Fencing Out Knowledge” is based on a year-long study that included a two-day symposium during the summer of 2013 and other research. Read report

ALA, public libraries to measure internet speeds, add to E-rate record
In July, the American Library Association and the Information Policy & Access Center (iPAC) at the University of Maryland College Park announced that plans to gauge the quality of public access to the internet in our nation’s public libraries this past summer. The speed test study is a supplement to a three-year National Leadership Grant to the ALA Office for Research & Statistics from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and is supported by the Association of Rural and Small Libraries, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the Public Library Association, and the Urban Libraries Council.

Simon & Schuster expands ebook lending program

In June, Simon & Schuster revealed that it will expand its pilot library ebook lending program to serve all U.S. libraries. Immediate Past President Barbara Stripling responded to the ebook expansion by releasing a press statement indicating ALA encouragement of the continued progress on the library ebook front, though noting much work remains to be done.

ALA Collaborates with Senator Byron Dorgan to Publish Op-ed in Roll Call

“America doesn’t move ahead by leaving some behind,” former Senator Byron Dorgan wrote in an op-ed published in June in Roll Call, where he made the case that the FCC should bolster its support for high-speed internet infrastructure development in rural American communities. In the piece, Sen. Dorgan advocated for increased support for E-rate, the program that helps schools and libraries obtain affordable vital Internet access and advanced telecommunications services. The op-ed was developed under the rubric of ALA’s Policy Revolution! initiative, a national public policy agenda and action plan for U.S. libraries supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Read the op-ed.

OTIP Leaders Attend ICMA Conference

In September, ALA staff attended the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Conference in Charlotte. Larra Clark, OITP deputy director, shared findings and new tools from the Digital Inclusion Survey, with a particular focus on how local communities can use the new interactive mapping tools to connect library assets to community demographics and concerns.

OITP Director Appointed to University of Maryland Advisory Board

In September, the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland appointed Alan Inouye, director of ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy to the inaugural Advisory Board for the university’s Master of Library Science degree program. The Advisory Board comprises of 17 leaders and students in the information professions who will guide the future development of the university’s MLS program. The Board’s first task will be to engage in a strategic “re-envisioning the MLS” discussion.

Chris Harris appointed OITP Fellow for youth and technology initiatives

In September, Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) appointed Chris Harris to serve as a Fellow for the emerging OITP program on Children and Youth Initiatives. In his other life,
Chris is the director of the School Library System for the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership, an educational services agency supporting the libraries of 22 small, rural districts in western New York. Most recently, Chris integrated his personal interest in gaming with his passion for education and non-traditional learning and is editorial director of Play Play Learn. Chris is in on the ground floor as OITP develops its new program and will be integral in shaping it as well as helping to coordinate with ALA’s youth divisions, the American Association for School Librarians, the Association for Library Service to Children, and the Young Adult Library Services Association.

**Margaret Kavaras Appointed as OITP Research Associate**

In August, ALA announced the appointment of Margaret Kavaras as a Research Associate for the organization’s Office for Information Technology Policy. As part of the OITP Fellows Program, Kavaras may work on diverse issues in information technology policy within the OITP portfolio. Kavaras previously worked for the technology policy unit as a Google Policy Fellow during the summer of 2014. Her appointment as a Research Associate will extend from September 1, 2014, through August 31, 2015.
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS (OGR)

Workforce Bill Finally Passes

In July, President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, a law that will open access to federal funding support to public libraries for effective job training and job search programs. ALA President Courtney Young applauded the presidential signing of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in a statement. ALA thanks Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ) for their efforts to include libraries in the legislation.

ALA Applauds Unanimous Ruling in Two Civil Liberties Cases

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld the Fourth Amendment when they ruled in David Leon Riley v. State of California and United States v. Brima Wurie that officers of the law must obtain warrants before they can search the cellphones of arrestees. The two cases began when police officers searched the cell phones of defendants Riley and Wurie without obtaining a warrant. The searches recovered texts, videos, photos, and telephone numbers that were later used as evidence. Earlier in March, the American Library Association and the Internet Archive filed a “friend of the court” brief in David Leon Riley v. State of California and United States v. Brima Wurie.

ALA Active on Surveillance and Privacy Issues

ALA continues to work closely and aggressively in tandem with partners in several coalitions to reform the multiple statutes that provide the government with various forms of surveillance and investigatory authority. In June, ALA joined more than 30 other civil liberties and privacy organizations in writing to key Members of the Senate to support the modification of the USA FREEDOM Act so that it truly ends the “bulk collection” of telephone business records, and builds transparency and additional oversight into court-approved surveillance activities.

ALA supports “CORE Act” to expand access to learning resources and school libraries

In June, ALA applauded the leadership of Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Sherrod Brown (OH-D) and Representative Marcia Fudge (OH-D) for introducing the “Core Opportunity Resources for Equity and Excellence (CORE) Act” (S. 2557/H.R. 5001). The legislation aims to address existing disparities in public education by establishing accountability requirements for states and school districts. Emily Sheketoff, executive director of the ALA Washington Office, announced support of the CORE Act and called upon library supporters to contact their legislators to cosponsor the bills with Rep. Fudge and Sens. Reed and Brown.

ALA Sends Letter to Data Advisory Council

ALA sent a letter to the director of the Office of Digital Engagement at the Department of Commerce to encourage the agency to appoint a librarian as part of the new Data Advisory Council. The letter stated: “The role of a librarian is to organize and deliver information in a usable, timely and accessible way; while aiding the public in utilizing that information as needed. Not only have librarians long handled government data, but they are always seeking new and
better ways to fulfill the public’s need of that information. The knowledge that librarians have of both accessing and utilizing data, would be of great benefit to the Department of Commerce.”

**ALA applauds second circuit affirmation of fair use**

In June, the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the ruling in *Authors Guild v. HathiTrust*, deciding that providing a full text search database and providing access to works for people with print disabilities is fair use. This decision affirms that libraries can engage in mass digitization to improve the discovery of works and provide full access to those works to students with print disabilities enrolled at the respective HathiTrust institutions. The Library Copyright Alliance (LCA), of which ALA is a member, filed an amicus brief in support of the HathiTrust.