Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)  
National Library Legislative Day  
May 5–6, 2014

**ALA’s Position:** The American Library Association (ALA) urges that when Congress reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), it include effective school library programs by incorporating the following provisions:

- Maintain dedicated federal funding for school libraries;
- Include provisions under Title I state and local plans and the Race to the Top Fund to establish a state goal of having a school library staffed by a state-licensed school librarian in each public school; and,
- Allow state and local professional development funds to be used to recruit and train school librarians.

**Background:**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), formerly known as “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB), is the authorization legislation for many federal K-12 education programs. Having been scheduled to be reauthorized in 2007, Congress has not yet passed any legislation that would do so. When ESEA is finally reauthorized it will dictate K-12 policy at all levels of government for many years to come. Therefore, the inclusion of school librarians into ESEA reauthorization is vitally important. School libraries were left out as a federal requirement under NCLB in 2002 and, as a result, many school librarians were the first to be eliminated when schools were faced with budget cuts in recent years.

**In the U.S. Senate**

The Senate ESEA bill (S. 1094, the Strengthening America’s Schools Act) authorizes a new school library program (Improving Literacy and College and Career Readiness Through Effective School Library Programs) that would provide dedicated funding to support effective school library programs that:

- Are staffed by a state-certified or licensed school librarian;
- Have up-to-date books, materials, equipment and technology (including broadband);
- Include regular collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians to assist with development and implementation of the curriculum and other school reform efforts;
- Support the development of digital literacy skills.

The Senate ESEA bill also authorizes a new literacy program (Improving Literacy Instruction) that would authorize public library programs as eligible entities for grants to provide children from birth through kindergarten with literacy instruction.

- In addition, the bill authorizes a librarian to serve as a member of the State Literacy Leadership Team and ensures that a state that receives a grant works to strengthen partnerships among schools, libraries, and other programs to improve literacy for all children.

**In the U.S. House of Representatives**

The House passed ESEA bill (H.R. 5) does not include provisions that would provide dedicated funding for school or public libraries. This bill passed the House with a 221-207 vote on July 19, 2013.