Phone call talking points

Take the time to make the 5 minute call to your Representative and Senators. Letting Congress know what issues are important to you, their constituent, is easy, effective and a key part of the democratic process! Here are some quick talking points for this call.

Be sure to tell Congressional staff who you are and why you are calling *“I’m calling in recognition of National Library Legislative Day.”*

**Library Funding**

* It pays to support library funding. An investment in libraries is an investment in education, lifelong learning and a community’s future.
* Libraries are among the most effective of all public services, providing a variety of services to 2/3 of the public using less than 2 percent of tax dollars.
* The average return on every tax dollar invested in libraries is $4.

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)

**ALA asks Congress for funding of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) at the FY 2012 level of $184.7 million for FY 2014.**

* LSTA is the primary source of annual funding for libraries in the federal budget. Most states use these funds to provide essential library resources which include statewide access to online subscription databases. These databases, which contain full text articles, are critical for homework support.
* Many families, due to limited financial resources, depend on free access to these types of library materials which are accessible online, at any time. Libraries may have to give up databases if LSTA funds are cut.
* Provide examples of how LSTA funding or other federal funding has helped your library meet the needs of your community.

Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)

**ALA asks Congress to fund the *Innovative Approaches to Literacy* (IAL) program at $28.6 million for FY 2014.**

* In FY 2012, the first year of this redirected money, the *Innovative Approaches to Literacy* (IAL) program was appropriated at $28.6 million. By law, at least half of this money ($14.3 million) must be allocated to a competitive grant program for underserved school libraries. The remaining money is allocated to competitive grants for national nonprofit organizations that work to improve childhood literacy.
* This program is important because school libraries, and the librarians who work in them, are the primary source for digital literacy training and the related education needed for students to gain the skills to function in careers and higher education in the digital age.
* At this writing, the FY 2013 amount for this grant has not yet been released. However *IAL* will be subject to the 5.23 percent across-the-board cuts from sequestration just like all federal discretionary spending.

**Libraries and early education**

**Include libraries as eligible entities in any early education initiative that pass through congress.**

* Local libraries have a long history of supporting early literacy education and play a key role in helping children become ready to read and be ready for school.
* The infrastructure is already in place. Libraries are available in almost every community and their importance is already understood by their community. Libraries engage in many partnerships with community agencies in order to extend services and programs. Including libraries as eligible entities in all early education appropriations will ensure results!

# Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation Act (LEARN)

# The LEARN Act was reintroduced recently in the Senate and sent to the Senate HELP committee. If this bill is moved to the floor of the senate ALA asks that provisions be added to the LEARN Act to ensure that library programs and activities are adequately included as part of an overall strategy to improve literacy by:

* Adding a new definition for “effective school library program” that at a minimum would include:

1. A school library that is staffed by state certified school librarian;
2. A school library that has up-to-date books, materials, equipment, and technology (including broadband); and
3. Regular collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians to assist with development and implementation of the curriculum and other school reform efforts.

* Ensuring that librarians are included in support for professional development.
* Including a review of school library programs in the local ‘Capacity Survey’ in schools that are targeted to receive grant funds to determine if they are “effective” and requiring grantees to use a portion of their funds on authorized activities for schools that do not have an effective school library program.
* Expanding uses of funds for K-12 activities (if applicable) for developing and/or maintaining “effective school library programs” that at a minimum would include:

1. Recruiting and hiring state certified school librarians;
2. Professional development;
3. Acquisition of materials, equipment, and technology; and
4. Activities to facilitate regular collaboration between classroom teachers and school librarians to assist with development and implementation of the curriculum and other school reform efforts.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

**ALA urges Congress, when it reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), to include school libraries 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-certified school librarian in each public school; and,
* Allow state and local professional development funds to be used for recruiting and training school librarians.