

**ALA Committee on Legislation
Report to Council
2019 Annual Meeting – Washington, DC
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June 25, 2019**

Public Policy Highlights

At the midpoint of 2019, the Committee on Legislation (COL) would like to pause and reflect on what we accomplished so far this year in public policy and advocacy.

2019 Fiscal Year Funding Campaign:

The change in party control in the House of Representatives has been good news for library funding. This past week, the House passed its first spending bills which included increases for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, IMLS (+\$25 million); the Library Services and Technology Act, LSTA (+\$17 million); the Innovative Approaches to Literacy program, IAL (+\$2 million); Title IV Well Rounded Schools (+\$130 million); the National Library of Medicine, NLM (+\$22 million); Title II Teacher Preparation (+\$500 million); Career and Technical Education, CTE State Grants (+\$700 million). Much work remains to be done. The Senate is likely to produce spending bills with level or reduced funding for many programs. Leaders from Congress and the White House have begun discussions of a budget deal which may drag on through the summer.

The Dear Appropriator letter campaign was successful thanks to the work of advocates across the country and the well-timed ALA Fly-in. The LSTA letters were signed by 150 Representatives and 45 Senators. The IAL letters were signed by 128 Representatives and 36 Senators. Overall numbers on these letters increased over last year. State Chapters were called on to send letters endorsing these letters and nearly ½ of state chapters responded with letters.

ALA Increases its Visibility in Congress:

ALA held several events during the first half of 2019 and were intended to increase the visibility of ALA and libraries on Capitol Hill. In lieu of National Library Legislative Day this year, ALA brought around 100 experienced advocates representing an array of libraries to Washington, D.C. for a congressional Fly-in. The Fly-In was a smaller, more strategic event held at the onset of the FY2020 appropriations cycle focusing on federal library funding priorities. Attendees followed up with the staff they met, requesting their member of Congress sign on to the “Dear Appropriator” letters. In February, ALA partnered with the D.C. Public Library to hold the first ever library card sign up event. Over 100 congressional staff attended the event to sign up for a card. In May, AASL President Kathryn Roots Lewis participated in an education panel to discuss the impact of the president’s budget proposal which would eliminate nearly all federal library support. In June, ALA organized a House briefing: Libraries Advance Literacy and Prevent the Summer Slide. A panel of library leaders and congressional staff discussed the role of libraries in literacy. Also in May, ALA organized the second “Digital Fab” event bringing together ALA and leaders in STEM technologies to educate congressional staff on the range of technologies available at the local library.

COL Convenes LSTA Funding Task Force:

At Mid-Winter, COL moved to create a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Task Force to focus on the resolution adopted by the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) in December 2018 in support of future funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Grants to States Program. Since Mid-Winter, the Task Force was active on a number of fronts. The group held several conference calls, drafted a mission statement and white papers, and created four subcommittees. At Annual, the Task Force invited representatives from IMLS to meet and outline all LSTA funding programs for libraries and librarians. The Task Force applauds the House increase of \$17 million for LSTA though recognizes that this increase is far from guaranteed. The Task Force will continue its work with a goal of developing strong, collaborative, long-term strategies and tactics for future increases in IMLS funding.

New resources for advocacy ala.org/advocacy:

Building on recent advocacy successes, the Public Policy and Advocacy (PPA) team recently introduced resources for ALA members to cultivate relationships with their members of Congress and congressional staff. Some of these include: Launch of Phone2Action campaign where members can text “Library” to 52886

and begin immediate action, a [social media advocacy toolkit](#), a [checklist](#) for video storytelling and live streaming events on social media, a tip sheet and video featuring freshman Representative Jennifer Wexton (VA-10) that illustrates how to arrange a congressional tour of a library, and, a series of short video takes reflecting the diversity of ALA members explaining why they are ALA advocates. PPA is rolling them out on social media, both during and after the conference, and the videos will be on the [I Am ALA](#) Gallery on ala.org (membership).

COL reaches out to ALA divisions:

COL members continue its outreach to the boards of each ALA division prior to Annual and offered to present information about the association's legislative activities and hear questions or suggestions from the divisions. COL members attended the meetings of ACRL, ALCTS, ASGCLA, Chapter Relations, LITA, LLAMA, PLA, Youth Groups (AASL, ALSC, YALSA). COL will provide written information to the other division boards to engage them in discussions about how to engage with the association's policy advocacy.

Policy Corps:

The Public Policy and Advocacy team welcomed the 2019 Policy cohort class for an in depth policy briefing. The briefing included outside policy experts and breakout sessions. COL will continue to discuss how the program can continue in future years in order to continue developing member expertise and relationships with policymakers.

ALA working to prepare libraries for 2020 Census:

ALA is committed to a fair, accurate, inclusive Census that recognizes the roles libraries will play in this vital civic effort. With support from ALA's 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force, ALA released the [Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census](#) on May 16, which provides background about the Census and information about how libraries can get involved. Visit ala.org/census to download the Guide, sign up for ALA's Census newsletter, and find key resources about the 2020 Census.

COL encourages all ALA members to advocate for library priorities:

Successful advocacy for library policy priorities relies on the active and continued engagement of ALA members as community leaders and policy advocates. COL encourages library professionals and supporters to join in the ongoing work of fostering relationships with policymakers in their communities. COL asks ALA

members to consider inviting their members of Congress to visit a local library this summer to show them how the library is transforming your community. ALA's public policy and advocacy staff can advise ALA members on how to begin working with the staff in your congressional district office.

Resolutions:

COL will coordinate with the Intellectual Freedom and International Relations Committees to review the draft "Resolution in Defense of the Free Speech of Supporters of the Movement for Palestinian Rights" that Council referred to those committees for their comments.

Subcommittee Reports

Copyright Subcommittee (aka Copyright, Legislation, and Education Library Network (CLEAN))

CLEAN was active this conference offering two copyright programs -- "Show Me the Money" on the fourth factor of fair use and "Fear the Law No Longer" where the outcomes of fair use court cases were discussed -- that were well attended. At the ACRL Copyright Discussion Group meeting, CLEAN members facilitated a Q&A discussion that was lively and informative. The appointment of copyright librarians or copyright "point people" at schools, colleges, universities, and special libraries is a trend that has not lessened indicating a continuing need to provide copyright programming and educational materials to librarians.

CLEAN is interested in providing a number of free webinars for the school library audience. They will consult with AASL, YALSA, and ALSC to assess interest. CLEAN will also revise the Copyright Advisory Network (CAN) switching the Q&A Forum to a copyright listserv over the next year to serve libraries in public, school and academic institutions. The "Lucy" Copyright Question booth was also staffed at conference on Saturday and Sunday by CLEAN members to respond to queries of passing conference attendees. They learned that many librarians want the digital tools on the CAN be updated so they can work on modern browsers and cell phones.

CLEAN anticipates submitting program proposals for next Annual this summer.

Government Information

COL's Government Information Subcommittee met at ALA's 2019 Annual Conference. The subcommittee heard a guest presentation from the National Archives and Records Administration regarding improvements to its records scheduling process under the Federal Records Act and an overview of programs and grant opportunities through the National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC). In addition, a representative of the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) provided an update regarding its programs to promote the preservation of government publications through the Federal Depository Library Program. The subcommittee also discussed the status of the FDLP Modernization Act, the GPO Director nomination, and the NHPRC reauthorization (H.R. 2978). Finally, the subcommittee discussed a draft Resolution on Funding the Preservation of Federal Government Publications; a motion was offered to recommend the resolution to COL at this time, and the motion did not pass.

Grassroots

The COL Subcommittee on Grassroots opened their meeting with an overview of ALA's new Phone2Action advocacy tool. The subcommittee tested the tool by texting "LIBRARY" to 52886 and discussed interests and ideas for utilizing the tool for state and local advocacy. The committee proceeded to have a robust conversation about future projects including continuing to spread the word on the new ALA Advocacy tools, ideas for new tools and interests in assisting and working alongside initiatives across advocacy groups/divisions.

The subcommittee concluded with a review of the new *I Am ALA* initiative where they viewed a short video of an ALA member explaining why they advocate for libraries. In order to help gather these authentic testimonials, the subcommittee members were then tasked by the chair to collect two videos to be shared on social media of conference attendees explaining why they advocate for libraries.

Telecommunications

The Telecommunications Subcommittee welcomed Bob Bocher who led a robust discussion of potential Universal Service Fund (USF) changes that could greatly impact library services. ALA will be engaged at the FCC as these changes are considered. ALA is engaged in responding to the FCC. Subcommittee also discussed net neutrality, digital equity, and infrastructure. Subcommittee discussed housekeeping issues including relations with COL, subcommittee membership and the possibility of virtual participation.

Conclusion

The sustained engagement of ALA members and America's library supporters is essential to advancing positive policy outcomes on these key issues. We call on ALA members to text "Library" to 52886, also join the ALA Action Center at ala.org/takeaction, respond to action alerts and advocacy opportunities, build relationships with their elected officials and community leaders, and communicate the impact that libraries have in our communities.