

ALA WASHINGTON OFFICE REPORT TO COUNCIL
January 16, 2019

WASHINGTON OFFICE NEWS

Committee on Legislation (COL) convenes, develops priority agenda at retreat

Under the direction of Chair Mario Ascencio, COL met with ALA's Public Policy & Advocacy staff in Washington for a two-day retreat to discuss the new Congress after the midterm elections, review the Washington Office strategic plan and re-evaluate library legislative priorities. The retreat included presentations by several representatives of ALA coalition partner organizations in D.C., including Public Knowledge and the National Hispanic Media Coalition. The COL agreed to a draft legislative agenda, which they will finalize and make public at MidWinter 2019, and they approved a new committee charge to be reviewed by the Committee on Organization. COL also approved new ALA award proposals for the James Madison and Eileen Cooke Awards, which will be reviewed by ALA's Awards Committee.

ALA's advocacy teams gather for retreat in Washington

ALA's Washington Office and the Office of Library Advocacy (OLA) staff spent the full week of September 10, together in a staff retreat, planning and strategizing about the many ways the two offices can join their advocacy efforts now that the offices have merged their reporting structure and are working more closely together. United for Libraries staff Beth Nawalinski and Jillian Wentworth as well as Michael Dowling from the Chapter Relations Office joined for the first day to share information about their advocacy priorities for 2019 and to participate in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training recommended by the Office of Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services and supported by the Human Resources Department. The group also welcomed current Chair of ALA's Chapter Relations Committee Julius C. Jefferson, Jr., who shared his vision for upgrading and modernizing the chapter advocacy platform as a part of a longer-term effort to improve ALA's ability to collaborate and mobilize at the federal and state levels around legislation of all types. As the week went on, advocacy and public policy staff discussed their roles, communications and office operations and then identified areas of collaboration that would contribute to goals and metrics in ALA's strategic plan for advocacy through 2019. Staff toured the Joseph F. Cullman 3rd Library of Natural History and the Smithsonian Library Digitization Suite, where they received greetings from Director Nancy Gwinn as well as Deputy Director and long-time ALA member Mary Augusta Thomas.

ALA welcomes Chicago staff to Washington

ALA staff in Washington hosted staff from the Chicago headquarters in October and November. Conference Director Paul Graller visited the Washington Office during a field visit in preparation for 2019 Annual and hosted a meeting of library stakeholders from DC, Maryland and Virginia. New YALSA Executive Director Anita Mechler had a get-to-know-you lunch with staff in Washington, where they shared their work and discussed opportunities to better partner together. In December Interim OIF Director Deborah Caldwell Stone was in town for a conference and she spent the afternoon with the Washington Office to discuss developments in intellectual freedom and privacy issues.

Washington Office hosts Google Policy Fellows

On August 1, WO hosted 2018 Google Policy Fellows from around the Washington, D.C., area for a lunch gathering to learn about libraries, library policy and ALA. Organized by ALA's Google Policy Fellow and ALA member Heather Braum, the lunch included staff presentations on major areas of ALA's advocacy and policy work and the roles of team members in accomplishing our goals. The gathering also provided an opportunity for the fellows to talk about their work and organizations, which ranged from the American Association for People with Disabilities to the National Consumers League.

Pat May retirement

In August the WO hosted a retirement celebration for retiring Director of Administration Pat May. Pat, who has been with ALA for nearly 30 years and worked with four different WO directors—Eileen Cooke (1972-93), Carol Henderson (1994-99), Emily Sheketoff (2000-17) and Kathi Kromer.

ADVOCACY OUTREACH

ALA connects members of Congress with makerspaces

In celebration of National Week of Making, the Washington Office collaborated with the House Congressional Maker Caucus to distribute a "Dear Colleague" letter to all members of Congress informing them of the resources available in library makerspaces in their home states and districts and encouraging their offices to visit makerspaces in their community's local libraries. Because of the "Dear Colleague" letter, several official congressional visits were conducted. Representative Alma Adams (NC-12) visited the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and staff from Rep. Hank Johnson (GA-04) visited the Gwinnett County Public Library. In addition, Rep. Charlie Crist (FL-13) visited the Clearwater Public Library and two other libraries in his district.

ALA, Ohio libraries hold workforce development event with Rep. Fudge (D-OH-11)

The Cuyahoga County Public Library, Cleveland Public Library, Ohio Library Council, Rakuten OverDrive and ALA organized "Libraries Educate Today's Workforce for Tomorrow's Careers," an event that focused on libraries as essential to creating, sustaining and retaining a viable workforce. Held on August 9, the event showcased government, business, and community leaders from Cuyahoga County and Cleveland, including a television news anchor, banking executives, and a mayor. Leaders from other parts of Ohio also participated, and the event was keynoteed by Rep. Marcia Fudge with remarks from ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo. The event represents one of the activities to strengthen the local-state-national linkage in library advocacy as prioritized in the Washington Office Strategic Plan. Based on the success of the Ohio event, the Washington Office is developing and refining its plans for the coming months. We are also working to leverage material from the event to include in our advocacy, such as this quote from Rep. Fudge: "Many job applications today are exclusively online. But the truth is, a lot of the people I represent don't have daily access to computers or broadband. We need to find ways to give them a fighting chance. It takes a real village, and the library is the hub of that village."

ALA researches, promotes resources for civic engagement in advance of midterm elections

ALA's 2018 Google Policy Fellow Heather Braum is conducting a study of libraries, civic engagement, and democracy for her major fellowship project. She administered a survey to the field and received 177 specific responses. The collected information includes examples of the ways America's libraries are advancing democracy and civic engagement in their communities and the infrastructure and relationships library staff need to develop to deliver these important services, through staffing, partnerships, and technology use. This study is also informed by ALA's prior body of work, especially Nancy Kranich's many contributions to this topic. A draft report was shared with the committees of the Washington Office and is now in revision. In addition, the Washington Office is collaborating with the League of Women Voters and Campus Vote Project to ensure library workers have resources to inform patrons in preparation for midterm elections in November. The League of Women Voters and Campus Vote Project will both provide a [blog post](#) to share ideas and resources libraries can use while planning their own voter outreach campaigns. The League of Women Voters hosted a webinar for ALA members on September 6, sharing nonpartisan ways that libraries can get involved and ensure patrons are prepared for election season.

ALA prepares for the 116th Congress

Following the November 2018 midterm elections, the Public Policy and Advocacy Office held a 60-minute American Libraries Live webinar, [What will the upcoming midterm elections mean for your library and community?](#), on Friday, November 9. Moderated by ALA Immediate Past President Jim Neal, the webinar featured Alan Inouye, senior director of public policy and government relations, ALA; ALA consultant and Penn Hill Group principal Vic Klatt; and Gigi Sohn, prominent public advocate and fellow at Georgetown Law Institute for Technology Law and Policy. Panelists provided an overview of key results from the 2018 elections and discussed how the results affect the library policy agenda, outreach and advocacy plans for 2019 and beyond.

In December, Manager of Public Policy Megan Ortegon and Deputy Director of Public Policy and Advocacy Kevin Maher co-led a Chapter Advocacy Exchange webinar for ALA members. The program, [Preparing for the 116th Congress](#), provided an overview of the upcoming FY2020 appropriations campaign, highlighting legislative priorities for 116th Congress and tools for engaging with new and returning members of Congress.

ALA focuses on year-round advocacy at state and regional conferences

In September, WO Associate Executive Director Kathi Kromer and Public Policy Manager, Megan Ortegon, delivered a presentation at the Virginia Library Association Annual Conference. The program, "Committing to a Long-Term Relationship: Library Advocacy Over and for the Long Term," focused on planning, communicating and using "at home" tools. Attendees received an introduction to the congressional calendar, tips for building a legislator profile and survey of key congressional staff and their roles. The program included an opportunity for participants to interact with staff and share personal experiences of their advocacy influencing an elected official. The audience participated in quick polls with statistics courtesy of the Congressional Management Foundation. The communication portion covered the impact success stories have on elected official and tips for engaging decision makers through social media and by writing [letters to the editor](#). For "at home" actions, staff focused on the significance of being an active participant in town hall meetings and hosting in district events.

In late October, Assistant Director Emily Wagner participated in a panel during the ACRL Delaware Valley Chapter unconference titled “Librarians as Advocates: Leading Activism on Your Campus and Beyond,” alongside Alex Gil, professor from Columbia University, Titus Moolathara, librarian at the Free Library of Philadelphia who began the Prison Library Project, and Rev. Yvette Davis, director of Outreach and Organizational Development at POWER Interfaith. Emily introduced attendees to the work of ALA’s advocacy and public policy staff as well as our movement to relationship-focused year-round advocacy.

Associate Executive Director Kathi Kromer attended and spoke at several conferences, including the West Virginia Library Association in November and in October, the Florida Library Association, where she gave the keynote address. She spent the morning with Todd Chavez, Dean of University of South Florida Libraries to learn about the latest happenings in library schools and spent the afternoon touring several libraries in the Tampa area along with Florida State Librarian Amy Johnson and Deputy Secretary of State Christie Fitz-Patrick. Kromer also participated in the New England and Rhode Island Library Association joint conference, where she joined U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), Rhode Island Chief of Library Services Karen Mellor, ALA Executive Board member Ed Garcia and ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo in recognizing the lifetime achievement of longtime ALA member and ardent library advocacy mentor Joan Ress Reeves.

ALA visits Tribal libraries

Ahead of the 2018 Joint Conference of Librarians of Color in Albuquerque, NM, WO Senior Policy Advocate Marijke Visser visited the Santo Domingo Pueblo Library (SDPL) as part of ongoing efforts to secure high capacity broadband for libraries in Tribal and rural or remote parts of the country. The pueblo collaborated with three other pueblos in the area to build a 100% tribally-owned fiber network to connect the libraries and K-12 schools to broadband. The resulting Middle Rio Grande Consortium secured \$4 million in funding from the Federal Communications Commission’s E-rate program, which provides discounts on broadband and other telecommunications services. Now that lack of broadband is no longer a limiting factor, SDPL Librarian Cynthia Aguilar has plans for expanding library services to include: video conferencing with grant agencies about library grant opportunities; technology for long- distance Tribal consultation with congressional and state representatives; coding classes for youth and young adults; and entrepreneurial opportunities for tribal artisans.

ALA reaches more libraries through Ready to Code

At Annual 2018, Libraries Ready to Code (RtC) [released](#) a beta version of the Ready to Code Collection, a website that includes content developed by the 28 grantee cohort libraries through the projects they implemented over the last year. The RtC team elicited feedback during the conference through live demonstrations of the website at the Google exhibit booth, through one-on-one user testing, and through a survey embedded in the website. Revisions to the content have been made, and the RtC team will be working with a developer to design and build a fully functioning website that will be the long-term home for the Collection and the overall initiative. To help with the dissemination of the final Collection and to ensure the content supports the needs of library workers serving children and youth, the RtC team assembled a task force consisting of two members from each youth division with plans to add a member representing

ODLOS. The task force is charged with developing an action plan that articulates strategies, projects and products within the current or existing division priorities to incorporate RtC themes and objectives. Each division appointed two representatives, a practicing librarian, and an LIS professor, to serve through Annual 2019.

The final Libraries Ready to Code (RtC) [website](#) was launched at the end of November. In conjunction with the launch and as part of the initiative's ongoing efforts to reach more libraries, ALA [awarded](#) 250 school and public libraries with \$500 in microfunding to help implement coding activities during Computer Science Education Week (December 2018). Ten of those libraries will be selected for "promising practices" and awarded an additional \$500. A review committee consisting of RtC libraries and LIS faculty will assist in the selection. The RtC task force continues its work of aligning RtC with youth division priorities

Marijke Visser presented "Libraries Ready to Code: At the Center of Coding, Computer Science, and Computational thinking Literacies" at the Bulgarian National Library Conference. With the theme of "Libraries and Digital Transformation," the conference was attended by about 300 public librarians and under the patronage of the EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society. RtC team members, including our Google partner, presented an interactive workshop focused on broadening participation among underrepresented youth and building awareness among teen librarians about the importance of connecting with their communities of computational thinking literacies for youth.

During CS Education Week in December, librarians Claudia Haines of Homer (Alaska) Public Library and Paula Langsam of Washington, D.C. Public Library and two RtC cohort members held a webinar for PLA, [Thinking Sideways: Computational Thinking and Early Literacy](#). Both presenters are also working with PLA's early literacy task force to connect RtC with Every Child Ready to Read. ALA will present the latest RtC developments at MidWinter 2019 in a Future of Libraries session, which will cover information from the external evaluation and its implications for children's and youth librarianship. The Conference also includes a workshop lead by RtC cohort libraries.

The RtC cohort libraries are moving into their role as RtC ambassadors and presenting at state and regional conferences as well as presenting at the Connected Learning Summit at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, and the YALSA Symposium.

ALA expands collaboration with Google on economic opportunity and workforce development

Building on the strong partnership between the ALA Washington Office and Google, a new \$1 million initiative focused on building digital skills for adults through library programs was [announced](#) in November. During 2019, Grow with Google will tour all 50 states and hold trainings for librarians as well as adults seeking digital skills in libraries. ALA will release microfunding for libraries following each state's training tour. PLA will administer the program in collaboration with the Washington Office.

ALA joins education community in advocacy day for federal funding

In July, members of the Washington Office joined the larger education community to lobby Congress for more funding for educational priorities, from birth through adulthood. Through partnership with the [Committee for Education Funding](#) (CEF), ALA joined advocates from the United Negro College Fund, American Federation of Teachers, National Parent-Teacher Association, Afterschool Alliance, American Speech-Language-Hearing Associations, as well as K-12 and higher education organizations. ALA staff participated in a Congressional briefing and visited Senate and Representatives from various education-related committee offices.

Office of Library Advocacy (OLA) supports school and public libraries on local issues

OLA offers behind-the-scenes strategic assistance for chapters that do not wish to bring a national spotlight to a sensitive local issue. Highlights of inquiries received include: consulting a library director in Nebraska and her Friends group to align their work with local, independent advocates and library supporters; helping state school library associations ensure that National Library Standards are recognized by state departments of education, including in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Alaska; and working with local advocacy groups in El Paso, TX to oppose the reallocation of 40% of the main library branch. The OLA team coordinated with the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) to support libraries facing pushback to drag queen story hours in states including Louisiana, Michigan and Kansas, and also worked with OIF on concerns around patron access to libraries in Iowa and Texas. Collaborations with the New Jersey Association of School Librarians are ongoing; local advocates are active in several districts, including Mahwah Township, where parents are working to restore weekly book checkout for elementary students. The team continues to monitor legislation and, with new sessions approaching, have reached out to a few states on pre-filed bills. Along with the Office for Intellectual Freedom, OLA held multiple bootcamps and train-the-trainer sessions in Fall 2018 for chapter, region, and school affiliate conferences in New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Wyoming, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, and Kansas.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY UPDATES

FEDERAL LIBRARY FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

Library funding protected for coming year

On September 28, the president signed the [FY 2019 funding bill](#) for Labor-HHS-Education and Related Agencies that included increases in [funding for library programs](#) and level funding for other programs. IMLS received an increase of \$2 million to be used for research and administration functions. Increases were also provided for library-eligible programs including the National Library of Medicine, Perkins Career and Technical Education, and Title IV education grants. Level funding was provided for the Library Services and Technology Act, Innovative Approaches to Literacy, and Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy programs. Most library funding was targeted for elimination earlier this year by the White House. [Tireless work by library advocates](#) across the country resulted in strong support from Appropriators in the House and Senate. ALA anticipates that library funding will again be targeted for elimination by the White House in 2019 and a third straight year of aggressive grassroots action will be necessary.

ALA celebrates MLSA reauthorization

ALA celebrated a [huge win at the close](#) of the 115th Congress with the passage (and Presidential signing) of the Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) reauthorizing the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) through 2025. Working with library champion Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) to introduce the MLSA, ALA staff and members spent much of 2018 urging congressional passage.

The legislation appeared to be on the fast track after the Senate unanimously passed MLSA in early December, but a [last-minute objection](#) from House Republican leaders threatened to undo our work. ALA launched a week-long, targeted grassroots and grasstops campaign (including publishing two letters to the editor in news outlets in Speaker Paul Ryan's district). House leadership relented and allowed the MLSA to be brought to the floor, where it [passed overwhelmingly \(331-28\)](#). The president signed the bill on December 31.

[Senator Jack Reed](#) (D-RI) introduced [S. 3530](#) in late September, an improved Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) that will increase the minimum funding states received under the LSTA Grants-to-States program. The MLSA will reauthorize IMLS and the LSTA program. The legislation will eventually increase the base funding from \$680,000 to \$1 million benefitting smaller states but ensures larger states will not lose any funding. Senator Reed was joined by 11 cosponsors including Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Kirstin Gillibrand (D-NY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). Senator Reed [thanked ALA](#) for its work in supporting the MLSA. The House companion, [H.R. 6988](#), was introduced by Reps. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Will Hurd (R-TX), Leonard Lance (R-NJ), and David McKinley (R-WV). Although a reauthorization is not a prerequisite for any program to receive funding by the Appropriations Committees, its passage sends a strong signal of support within Congress.

Career and technical bill recognizes libraries

In August, the President signed a reauthorization of the [Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act](#) (Perkins CTE). The bill supports the role of libraries in implementing CTE education programs. Congress provides more than \$1.2 billion in federal funding for CTE programs annually through the Perkins Act. Although the authorization for Perkins CTE expired in 2012, Congress has continued to provide annual funding. In 2017 ALA [urged congressional passage](#) of Perkins CTE reauthorization and the inclusion of provisions in the bill that recognize school and public library contributions in implementing CTE programs. ALA efforts were successful as the final bill included several references that urge state and local disbursement of Perkins funding to consider supporting library programs, maker spaces, and librarian training. The reauthorization allows states to set their own CTE program goals, providing an opportunity for school and public libraries to weigh in and advocate for the inclusion of libraries in implementing these state goals.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

Unfavorable copyright legislation stalls

[The Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act \(S. 1010\)](#) was successfully delayed following intense lobbying efforts including a record number of email messages from library advocates to the Senate in the waning days of the lame duck session in December. The [Library](#)

[Copyright Alliance \(LCA\)](#) has opposed the legislation and its companion version (H.R. 1695) that passed by the House in April 2017. Jonathan Band, legislative counsel for the Library Copyright Alliance (LCA), testified on September 25 before the Senate Rules and Administration Committee, responsible for oversight of the Library of Congress. The legislation removes the hiring authority for the Register of Copyright from the Librarian of Congress to the President, purportedly to provide more transparency in the appointment process. Rights holders crafted the legislation to prevent Librarian Carla Hayden from appointing a Register who they believe would favor a minimalist copyright agenda, and in reaction to the ouster of former Register of Copyrights Maria Pallante, a favorite of the legacy content community. In a scathing blog post Copyright Alliance CEO Keith Kupferschmid accused ALA of running a “disinformation campaign” against the legislation. Alan Inouye reiterated ALA’s position in a point-by-point counter [response](#) published in the Re:create coalition blog, “Library advocates put copyright lobbyists on the defensive.” While the legislation is stalled for now, in the next Congress, S. 1010 will very likely be introduced again. Library advocates will likely be called on again to stop the legislation.

Another copyright bill that may be re-introduced is the [Copyright Alternative in Small-Claims Enforcement \(CASE\) Act \(H.R. 3945\)](#). The CASE Act would create a small claims court within the U.S. Copyright Office to adjudicate infringement lawsuits brought by independent rights holders who do not have the financial backing to bring their cases to federal court. While [LCA](#) argues that the legislation is not workable, its outcome is inconsequential to library interests.

Marrakesh

The [Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act \(S. 2559\)](#) was passed by the House after ratification as a treaty by the Senate, and was presented to the President September 28. The U.S. will join other nations who have ratified the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) international treaty to provide broader access to accessible works for people with print disabilities. ALA has been advocating for this treaty and legislation since 2007. S. 2559 amends the Chafee Amendment (§121 of the copyright law), expanding the exception for people with print disabilities by including additional “authorized entities” such as libraries to provide accessible content, by expanding the beneficiary group to include people with dyslexia or physical handicaps that prevent them from using a print book, and by expanding accessible formats to include digital files. The international library and print disabled communities are working with WIPO’s [Accessible Book Consortium \(ABC\)](#), a public-private partnership to increase the number of accessible books available, create a searchable database of accessible titles, and facilitate the sharing of copies with the nations that have ratified the Marrakesh Treaty.

Music Modernization Act

The Senate’s version of the [Music Modernization Act \(S. 2334\)](#) was passed by the House ([H.R. 1551](#)) and on its way for presidential signature. The legislation has three components, with Title II regarding pre-1972 sound recordings of most importance to libraries. A more library friendly version introduced by Senator Wyden [called the Accessibility for Curators, Creators, Educators, Scholars, and Society \(ACCESS\) to Recordings Act \(S. 2933\)](#) ultimately prevailed. It federalizes copyright protection for pre-1972 sound recordings bringing them under federal copyright protection rather than individual state law protection. This means that these recordings will be treated in the same way as other protected works—a full set of exclusive rights that includes a

full set of copyright exceptions, including fair use, preservation, and first sale. The legislation also provides a term of copyright. Rather than all pre-1972 sound recordings being protected until 2067, copyright terms will be shorter depending on when the sound recording was first published.

CASE Act

The House had a hearing on the [Copyright Alternative in Small Claims Enforcement \(CASE\) Act \(H.R. 3945\)](#). This legislation would create a small claims court in the Copyright Office to litigate alleged copyright infringement for individual rights holders who cannot afford the costs of a federal trial. The rationale behind the bill is well-intentioned but ALA opposes this proposed [solution](#). This legislation will be taken up after the midterm elections and the Washington Office is closely monitoring its progress.

ALA leaders visit “Big Five” publishers in New York City

In December ALA’s senior director of public policy and government relations Alan Inouye, ALA president Loida Garcia-Febo and ALA Past President Sari Feldman had separate meetings with Hachette Book Group, Penguin Random House, Macmillan Publishers, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, the Book Industry Study Group and the Authors Guild. As noted in American Libraries’ blog [The Scoop](#), one important conclusion from the meetings is that ALA and the library community need to work with publishers and other major stakeholders on an ongoing basis, focusing on both near-term issues such as specific ebook licensing terms as well as broader strategic industry issues and relationships. Also, much greater focus is needed on strategic issues as well as tactical ones. In particular, the continued rise of Amazon as the major force in book and ebook distribution has fundamental implications for the future role of libraries and providing access to content. The plight of authors also merits increased scrutiny as the digital age has brought them economic challenge—just like libraries. ALA is following up with publishers and related organizations on these issues.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY

ALA advocates for rural wireless broadband

ALA advocated for better wireless broadband for rural areas as a charter member of the [Broadband Access Coalition](#). This coalition submitted a [proposal](#) to the Federal Communications Commission and submitted several filings this quarter arguing for new spectrum in the 3.7 GHz frequency band to be opened and shared on favorable economic terms so that companies and communities can provide low-cost broadband to consumers and rural anchor institutions like libraries.

ALA supports House bill to streamline broadband deployment to rural and Tribal communities

In our ongoing efforts to increase access for rural and tribal libraries to fast, affordable, and open broadband, ALA sent a letter in support of the [Rural Broadband Efficiency Act \(H.R.4824\)](#) introduced in the House by Congressman John Curtis (R-UT-3). The bill addresses barriers that prevent internet service providers and telecommunications providers from expediting their broadband deployment efforts, inadvertently delaying build-out to some of the most remote areas

where there are often limited options for broadband service and costs are prohibitive. The bill [passed](#) the full House in September and has been introduced in the Senate ([S. 604](#)) by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT).

ALA releases new policy brief, supports legislation to promote Tribal Connect Act

ALA, along with allies such as the Association for Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums, continues to support the Tribal Connect Act ([S. 2205](#) / [H.R. 5661](#)) introduced by Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Dean Heller (R-NV) and Congressmen Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) and Markwayne Mullin (R-OK). The legislation aims to enable Tribal libraries and communities to overcome the numerous challenges they face in using FCC resources to secure fiber connectivity.

To bring attention to broadband challenges for tribal libraries, ALA released “[A Broadband Imperative: Equitable Opportunity for Tribal Communities through Libraries.](#)” Highlighting the success of the Middle Rio Grande Consortium, the policy brief describes opportunities for Tribal libraries and their communities and details a bill in Congress that addresses the shortcomings of the E-rate program for Tribal libraries.

ALA supports bipartisan AIRWAVES Act

ALA joined a broad group of public advocates, educational organizations, taxpayer organizations and associations, in signing a letter to express support for [S. 1682](#) and [H.R. 4953](#), the Advancing Innovation and Reinvigorating Widespread Access to Viable Electromagnetic Spectrum (AIRWAVES) Act. The legislation, sponsored by Senators Gardner (R-CO) and Hassan (D-NH) and Reps. Lance (R-NJ-07) and Doyle (D-PA-14), establishes a process and identifies specific spots to move federal spectrum into commercial use. The AIRWAVES Act also includes a proposal to take a portion of the spectrum auction proceeds to fund wireless infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas. This letter furthers ALA's efforts to ensure equitable access to wireless broadband through technologies like Wi-Fi, which runs over unlicensed spectrum.

ALA joins amicus seeking restoration of robust net neutrality protections

In August 2018, ALA argued in support of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) strong, enforceable rules to protect and preserve the open internet with an [amici filing](#) with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. ALA joined the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and higher education organizations including the American Council on Education and EDUCAUSE in support of petitioners in the case of Mozilla Corporation v. Federal Communications Commission and United States of America. ALA asserts that the FCC's 2017 Order will “imperil the internet's continued operation as a reliable platform for research, learning and information sharing, and that the FCC's decision should be reversed as arbitrary and capricious.” ALA also continues to [advocate](#) for using the Congressional Review Act to restore strong, enforceable net neutrality rules.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION POLICY

ALA highlights libraries' roles in achieving a complete count in 2020 Census

The [2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force](#), which was co-convened by PLA and one of the Washington Office committees, held its first meeting at Annual 2018. The task

force will inform ALA's efforts to prepare libraries for the upcoming 2020 Census, which will be the first decennial census to offer the public an option to respond online. ALA anticipates this online option will bring large numbers of users into libraries to complete their census questionnaire via library computers and internet connections. The Washington Office is working to ensure libraries are informed about the 2020 Census and can plan for potential demands. The Census Bureau hosted an exhibit booth at Annual 2018 to provide information to libraries and plans to attend additional ALA and library conferences through 2020. The Washington Office is leading efforts to encourage the Census Bureau and community leaders to include libraries in their preparations and outreach activities. For instance, the Washington Office successfully advocated for language to be included in a Senate Appropriations Committee report encouraging the Census Bureau to collaborate with libraries. In addition, former COL chair Kent Oliver addressed the National Association of Counties' [conference](#) in July to discuss libraries' roles in informing their communities about the 2020 Census and encourage local officials to collaborate with local libraries. In October, ALA released "[Libraries and the 2020 Census](#)," a brief for elected officials and decisionmakers, and has led events or represented ALA around the country:

- October 25: ALA co-hosted a Census Solutions Workshop at the Chicago Public Library with nearly 80 participants, including librarians and regional leaders.
- November 9: ALA's Larra Clark spoke to municipal leaders from around the country at the National League of Cities' City Summit about the roles that libraries can play in the 2020 Census.
- On December 6: ALA's Gavin Baker spoke to state legislators at the National Conference of State Legislatures' Capitol Forum.

New research also highlights the impact of libraries: on October 23, the Center for Urban Research at the City University of New York released a [new study](#) showing that a public library is located within five miles of 99% of the census tracts at greatest risk of being undercounted, along with a [mapping tool](#) to locate public libraries near those communities. ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy team will continue activities through 2020 to prepare libraries and to highlight the importance of including libraries in this national and community effort.

ALA applauds passage of Open Government Data Act

On December 21, Congress passed [ALA-supported](#) legislation to improve public access to government data. The Open, Public, Electronic, and Necessary (OPEN) Government Data Act was included as part of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act ([H.R. 4174](#)). The House had previously [passed the bill in November 2017](#); on Dec. 19, the Senate passed the bill with amendments, and the House and Senate agreed on final text on Dec. 21. ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo [commented](#), "This bill will make it easier for libraries to offer valuable data that makes American innovation and economic growth possible." The bill was signed into law on January 14, 2019.

Congressional Research Service reports are now public

On Sept. 17, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) [launched](#) a [new website to provide public access to non-confidential reports by CRS](#). The website implements a provision of the Consolidated Appropriations Act [signed by the president in March](#). ALA has [long advocated for public access to CRS reports](#), dating back to a Council resolution adopted in 1998. CRS is a federal agency, housed within the Library of Congress, that prepares public policy research for

members of Congress, including non-confidential reports about a range of topics. These reports had not been routinely published, but the new provision now requires CRS to establish a website to provide free, online public access. The new legislation will enable libraries to provide their users with free, authentic copies of these public policy reports. ALA believes it is [important for CRS to consult with users and stakeholders](#) in implementing the law and to move quickly to provide the greatest possible public access.

ALA applauds passage of grant data modernization

On Sept. 26, the House passed the Grant Reporting Efficiency and Agreements Transparency (GREAT) Act ([H.R. 4887](#)). ALA sent a [letter in support of the bill](#), which would modernize reporting by recipients of federal grants and improve access to grant data, including for IMLS and its grantees. Also on Sept. 26, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved the Senate companion bill ([S. 3484](#)).

ALA continues call to modernize Federal Depository Library Program

ALA has continued to call for passage of the FDLP Modernization Act ([H.R. 5305](#)), which would modernize the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) to improve public access to government information. The Committee on House Administration [approved](#) the bipartisan bill on April 12; however, the bill was referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, which has not yet considered the legislation. ALA and other stakeholders have continued to advocate for Oversight and Government Reform Committee to approve or discharge the bill so that it can proceed to the House floor or for the bill's sponsors to develop new legislation that will not be subject to that committee's jurisdiction. The FDLP Modernization Act was developed with input from the library community following a series of [public hearings](#) in 2017, which included testimony from librarians and incorporates many of the [recommendations](#) that ALA sent to the committee.

ADDITIONAL POLICY ENGAGEMENT

ALA urges the reunification of detained migrant children with their parents

At the annual conference in June, COL proposed and council approved a resolution entitled "[Resolution to Reunite Detained Migrant Children with their Parents](#)." The resolution was in response to the Administration's "zero tolerance" policy which led to the separation of hundreds of refugee children from their parents. ALA's resolution detailed the organization's official stance opposing the policy, called on federal agencies to appropriately document the separated children, and urged members to contact their elected officials to express continuing concern regarding the criminalization and separation of refugee families at the border. Both a copy of the resolution and a corresponding letter from ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo was sent to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services.

ALA weighs in with coalition partners on policy issues

ALA continues to work closely with national allies to advance our positions on a variety of public policy concerns. Along with prominent coalition partners such as Public Knowledge and the National Hispanic Media Coalition, ALA submitted joint comments to the FCC in support of the Citizens Broadband Radio Services to improve broadband access in unserved and

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underserved areas. ALA also signed numerous coalition letters on issues including (but not limited to) government records on immigration, deportation and family separation; privacy; 2020 U.S. Census; and government information.