>> Hello, everyone. Welcome to the virtual membership meeting. I am Melissa, your director of membership here at ALA. I will serve as moderator for today's event. Before we begin I would like to review a few logistical items. First of all, I would like to remind everyone of our statement of appropriate conduct which says in part ALA seeks to provide a conference environment in which diverse participants may learn, network and enjoy the company of colleagues in an environment of mutual human respect. We recognize a shared responsibility to create and hold that environment for the benefit of all. Some behaviors as noted on the screen are strictly prohibited.

For today's event please use the Q&A feature for all formal communications to our presenters. There is dedicated time on the agenda for questions. Informal comments or technical questions can be shared in the chat area to interact with your fellow attendees. The Q&A and chat space is on the bottom of your screen. Closed captioning is also available at the bottom of your screen.

ALA members who wish to have a question addressed by the features shall use the Q&A feature which will be monitored by staff. Again, the chat feature will not be used for formal questions or comments and attendees will always be virtually muted unless asked to speak.

You can connect today with others via Facebook, connector on
Twitter with the #VMM22. If you have any technical questions during the event, please use the chat space for support and we will do our best to reply to you as quickly as possible. We are recording this session and it will be posted within the next few days.

Now without further ado I would like to introduce you to ALA president Patty Wong. Over to you.

>> Patricia Wong: Thank you, Melissa. I will be chairing today's 2022 virtual membership meeting which I am officially calling to order. This meeting is being held in accordance with ALA bylaws article 2, section 4, which states membership meetings may be held virtually and the executive board shall establish the procedures for such meetings. Membership meetings are convened to communicate with members about the association's work and to allow members the opportunity to participate by offering a venue where members may submit resolutions for consideration. The deadline to submit resolutions from members was at least 48 hours prior to the calling of a virtual meeting to order. We received one resolution. The resolution calling for student loan cancellation, ALA, VMD document number 2. Today's agenda is displayed on the screen and made available on the virtual membership meeting website, ALA VMD number 1. The agenda shows today's main topics. If there are no objections, the chair declares the agenda adopted. It is a pleasure to be here with you today for the annual membership meeting. This is the opportunity for ALA members to convene in advance of ALA conference to discuss important issues to the profession and important issues to ALA. When I ran for president, I talked about the stressors that were facing librarians and libraries. At the time I mentioned stressors such as digital access, intellectual freedom and legislation, funding, and innovation. And as I was setting the vision for my presidency, I could have never imagined the degree to which these stressors would amplify because of the pandemic. I also could not have ever imagined the personal fatigue and uncertainty that would result for all of us. When I said my vision for the organization, I also mentioned that our success will come from managing that change and not allowing it to manage us. I am so proud of the way that librarians and library workers have managed that change and found innovative ways to serve their communities.

ALA has been focusing on doing the same. We've been focusing on ways to serve the membership through this change and support the member community. Prioritizing issues of importance to libraries and also working to sustain the business of the organization through challenging times. This change is hard, made harder by pandemic fatigue and book bans. But librarians and library workers preserve as does ALA.

I wanted to highlight a few specific efforts under way at ALA that I want you to be aware of. The March/April issue of American libraries is focused on digital equity. One of the pillars of my
presidency has been around this topic. One of my favorite pieces in the issue is an info graph I can on digital equity that looks at how the pandemic has worsened high speed affordability and increased need. How discount programs like emergency broadband benefit affordable connectivity program, help communities, and how libraries fill the gap and how federal funding and programs can help.

ALA remains focused on connecting libraries with funding. The libraries transforms communities project will offer $7 million in grants to increase accessibility of facilities, services, and programs. Applications will open in November so look for more information soon. The ALA connect live series remains focused on important issues in libraries and our February program was dedicated to sustainability. This is a lifelong passion for me and I will ask staff to include the link to the recording in the chat for you to listen later.

There was an incredible amount of information shared about how to build sustainable practices within libraries and how ALA is building sustainability into conferences. The April ALA connect live will spotlight tribal libraries, another priority of my presidency.

Thank you for investing in ALA and for continuing to invest in ALA. This organization is here to serve you and your participation today shows that you are invested in guiding ALA into this new future. I am looking forward to convening with all of you in person at the annual conference in DC. I know that I will walk away from our time together inspired for the future of libraries and that inspiration and connection is so important right now. ALA is going to keep innovating and improving to ensure that we deliver member connections and value to each of you. Thank you.

I will now pass things over to ALA treasurer Maggie fairly.

>> Thank you. Good morning, everyone. I am very pleased these last few months to work with the CEO who is committed to member engagement and transparency. If you did not meet her during the meetings, I hope you have an opportunity to interact with her soon. As well I want to note the excellent leadership of our interim CFO and the hard work of the entire ALA finance office in providing the good news of today's update. First, FY21 audit. In February, the finance and audit committee and the executive board completed the FY2021 audit. Overall ALA reported a net revenue of $1.1 million. Although ALA received COVID relief support, the payroll protection plan or the PPP fund did not completely offset loss of revenues. Cost containment measures including ALA staff furloughs of at least -- excuse me, including staff furloughs. These cost measurements, containment measurements of at least $1.2 million occurred in FY21 and has contributed to financial stability. Our short term cash position has strengthened. Revenue continues to be a concern as our traditional revenue streams of membership and
Publishing are down, but those metrics when compared with other associations are typical during the pandemic. But we need to continue to pay attention to these metrics.

Contributed revenue has been very strong with external grants and corporate partnerships. And we need to continue this effort in the coming years. Outstanding loans are being tracked for a new feature in our financial reporting and we continue to keep our loans very low with very favorable interest rates. The endowment transfer returns for two years has also helped us navigate these pandemic years.

I am pleased to announce that ALA's guide star rating for nonprofit transparency and accountability has increased from silver to gold. Less than 5% of nonprofits registered with guide star are recognized with a gold seal. And this is an important measure of our direct support to members.

Regarding the current FY22 budget, it is performing well, although we are examining live learn act results which did not attract as many paid attendees as we had hoped. But we are working to keep expenses in line with actual revenue throughout this FY22 budget.

The FY23 budget planning is under way. ALA units, divisions and roundtables have begun to prepare their FY2023 budget. The FY23 budget will begin in September. The process will incorporate budget assumptions and budget objectives. These were presented during our January meeting. The budget analysis review committee, finance and audit subcommittee and the executive board will assess the very first preliminary budget in April. These financial entities will also examine the second preliminary budget in June. Also in June the executive board will bring forward to ALA counsel the annual estimates of income for their review as well.

I have just a very brief update on the ALA endowment. So the current balance of our endowment is approximately $66 million. ESG investments make up 53% of the endowment and our diversity managers, which is another goal for the endowment trustees, make up 4%. This is an area in which the endowment trustees are focused on. The planning for FY23 division roundtable and units may plan up to a 5% pay out. If you have any questions of that, regarding that, please do see your ALA staff member or you can contact me directly.

As a reminder, all financial and audit reports are located on the ALA executive board and council document website. That concludes my brief update. Thank you for this time in providing a financial overview.

>> Patricia Wong: Thank you so much. I will now call on Tracie Hall. Welcome.

>> Thank you so much and thank you so everyone for being here. I want to wish everyone good afternoon to some of you, of course, good morning and evening to others, and I also want to say that we will be addressing in this membership meeting two of the most pressing
concerns facing libraries and information services and the communities we serve. And we hear this directly from you. Those two concerns being equity, diversity and inclusion and intellectual freedom. While our intellectual freedom team will be addressing the latter, I will take this opportunity to speak to some of the initiatives that ALA will execute now and in fiscal year 2023. I want to thank my colleagues very much for supporting me in advancing the slide. Next, please.

We believe that inclusion is an imperative. And per that imperative, in January of this year ALA council approved the adoption of the DEI scorecard that had been created by the committee on diversity and in conjunction with -- namely the five suggested scorecard measures have been adopted as administrative priorities here. One, the embeddedness of DEI or EDI into the culture and climate of ALA as an organization. Two, regular training in education and we have identified every three years as our interval for renovation which will ensure that training becomes part of the onboarding process for all new staff as well as becomes something that we are ensuring is central to our work here at ALA for all staff. Three, recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion. I'll say more about that shortly. As well as ensuring that we have distinct and precise budget priorities that support DEI. And finally, data practices, integration of DEI into our data practices for both internal as well as field review. And I'll say a little bit more about that shortly. Next, please. So I want to share a couple of areas that we will be prioritizing and focusing on here. Again, these are very succinct and sort of truncated for the purpose of this presentation today and I am happy to speak more about each of these at our upcoming June board meetings.

Number one is beginning this fiscal year, ALA will adopt as I've said a three-year cycle for training and education for all staff. Two, ALA has begun to implement a policy to ensure the inclusion of BIPOC and/or individuals with disabilities in the candidate school for all posted ALA positions. Three, in keeping with these efforts as we have recently announced, ALA will hire its first accessibility officer by the end of fiscal year '22.

Next, working with the office of -- for accreditation, the committee on accreditation, the executive board has directed the executive office to support the introduction of EDI as one of the key metrics in the accreditation review process by the end of Fiscal year '23. This alone signals a change not eventually for the field but also for LIS education and we want to pay close attention here.

Next, ALA, and I'm very pleased to announce this, will launch the institute for the study of race and libraries and information technology as part of the center for the future of libraries this fiscal year. This work will be carried out by a designated senior
fellow and that fellow will be announced this spring. And finally, by the end of fiscal year 2023, ALA will launch a one-year residency program to serve as an ALA workforce pipeline for early to mid career LIS and A association professionals interested in LIS or association management. Other internships at the post secondary level are also in consideration.

So I will stop there. I know that there are some queries. I am looking forward to sharing more and I will address some of the questions in chat. I'll stop here and I'll turn it back over to you, president Wong, and thank you very much.

>> Patricia Wong: Thank you so much. I think all of our numbers are excited about all of the work that's being done around EDI and more. And now I'm going to turn to the heart of our issues right now. When building the agenda for this meeting, the ALA membership committee share Miranda Bennett posted a survey to the member community on connect to see what topics were top of mind for you. It was not surprising that book challenges were at the top of the list. In November, 2021, due to a dramatic uptick in book challenges and outright removal of books from libraries, ALA executive boards and all the boards of directors released a joint -- focused on LGBTQ+ issues and books by black authors or that document the black experience or the experiences of other BIPOC individuals. I am so glad and pleased to have Deborah Caldwell-stone from ALA's office for intellectual freedom here to provide an update on this important work and welcome, Deborah.

>> Deborah Caldwell-Stone: Thank you, President Wong. I'm glad to be here and glad for this opportunity. As anyone who receives OIS weekly intellectual freedom news knows, we're seeing a well organized, well funded campaign conducted by advocacy groups across the country. They're engaging in a campaign to censor books and other resources in schools and libraries. They're targeting books written by black authors, books that reflect the lives and experiences of black persons, indigenous persons, and persons of color, and demanding the removal of books centering the lives and concerns of LGBTQIA persons, especially those books that speak to the lives of gay, queer, transgender youth. Raising moral panic that spur school boards and library boards to disregard their policies, to order the immediate removal of a book. Sometimes hundreds of books based solely on an unverified and false claim that books are pornography or promote critical race theory or somehow un-American, indoctrination. As a consequence, the office for intellectual freedom has received a record number of reports in the last six months that document the escalating demands to ban books. 330 in the three months between September 1st and November 30th alone. We are finishing up the analysis of our censorship data for 2021 and we'll be sharing that data with you during national library week but our initial tallies indicate that 2021 was a banner year for library
censorship. We've set up an online portal that pulls together all of the resources and materials available across the association to help libraries, library workers and community members fight book bans in their schools and libraries. It's a one stop shop for library and intellectual freedom advocates defending free and open access to library resources. We're also tracking adverse legislation in the states. Proposed laws that would mandate the censorship of school curriculum and library materials and threaten to defund libraries and impair librarians professional authority and even criminalize the -- criminalizing the act of supplying books about health and gender and sexual identity to young people. Collaborating with ALA's public policy and advocacy office, we are deeply engaged in the necessary work to challenge and prevent passage of these bills. We hosted a legislative Summit in the fall for state chapter advocacy leaders and created a state legislative tool kit to support state chapters and ALA members working with their state representatives to halt adoption of these laws. But today I want to highlight an important part of ALA's response to the current state of book bans. Since 1967 the office for intellectual freedom has supported individual members efforts to fight book censorship. We do this work in partnership with the freedom to read foundation and the Leroy C. merit humanitarian fund. As you can see from this timeline that highlights the work was office, we've one victories large and small ranging from a unanimous Supreme Court decision that assured that the first amendment applied without restriction to the Internet to supporting librarians challenging a patriot act order to providing ongoing legal support for the students of the Tucson unified school district as they fought to overturn Arizona's ban on Tucson's Mexican American studies program. From the time of its founding, the office for intellectual freedom has been receiving calls. Calls from librarians seeking advice on how to prevent censorship of collection says and calls wanting policy advice. And librarians seeking help in obtaining legal counsel so they can fight discrimination or preserve their jobs that they defended their user's freedom to read. The office for intellectual freedom is the original censorship hotline for libraries and librarians fighting censorship. We're also the primary data resource documenting banned and challenged books in the United States. Now we've promised confidentiality. A crucial protection for librarians who fear losing their jobs if they stand up on their board, principal or elected officials but who still want advice on what they can do to prevent censorship of their collections. From the beginning staff has supplied support and help to library workers and educator whose write to us and call us asking for that assistance. And OIF has always responded. Sometimes providing book reviews, model policies and strategies and sometimes helping them obtain legal counsel when circumstances make that
necessary. And sometimes OIF staff just listens. We consider this our most important work because we promise confidentiality we don't often get to highlight it but today I'm pleased to be able to introduce two wonderful, brave librarians who reached out and are willing to share their experiences with you. I'd like to introduce Kristin and invite her to join us. You know her OIF's smart and talented assistant director but she came to OIF via Wisconsin where she was the team librarian. In 2009 Kristin and her colleagues reached out to OIF when a local activist sought to ban some 70 young adult books many of them dealing with LGBTIA themes. Kristin, could you join us and share your story.

>> Thank you, Deborah. The day that we received a request for reconsideration in our library book drop changed my life. Tuesday, February 3rd, 2009, I remember it like it was yesterday. Before it became a book challenge, it was a complaint about a reader's advisory list at our library website. It was titled out of the closet, books for LGBT teens. But it didn't stop there. By Friday the front page of the paper read library gay link criticized. From then on for five months my life was nothing but newspaper articles, letters to the editor, social media opinions, blog posts, requests and emails and meetings about "those books."

Parents wouldn't let their teens volunteer for the summer reading program because of me. I received voice mails telling me I was going to hell. That I had a gay agenda. And that I couldn't be a good mom because I exposed innocent children to pornography. Throughout this whole experience, I was pregnant with my first baby. I remember walking out of the back door of the library and sitting in my car in a parking lot sobbing. I was filled with all of these hormones inside of me, but so much stress and fear. It was just too overwhelming.

Was I going to lose my job? Was I doing the right thing? Was I going to be a bad mom? Early on in the process someone had recommended that I call ALA. I ended up talking on Angela Maycock. In 2020 she was OIF's director. She helped me gather what I needed to defend the individual titles, especially as the list continued to grow and grow and grow. She provided tools and resources when she could, but we both knew it wasn't about the books. I still don't really know what is inside a person that pushes them to hate so much, to censor or to ban books, to burn books. To call people such vile names and falsely accuse them of such heinous crimes. I don't know if I ever will understand that. I don't know if Angela understood, but she listened. She listened to me cry. She listened to me vent. I had to be so safely about what I said and who I talked to. Even with my family, they would get so angry on my behalf for the things people would say about me and I felt guilty for putting that on their shoulders. So Angela was who I turned to.

Despite city council calling the library a porn shop, despite
tossing four people off of our library board, the books were retained. And June 2nd, we all met in the elementary school gym, the largest facility we could find so as to not violate fire codes or open meeting laws. The board listened to comments. 60 people spoke. Some people telling stories about their gay kids who never felt accepted. Some people calling for the books to be burned. I presented information about the library floor plan indicating exactly how many feet apart the YA books were from the toddler board books. Deborah Caldwell-stone talked about the first amendment. Deborah and Angela drove to west bend.

Three hours north of Chicago, to be at the board meeting and to talk about banned books and the freedom to read with our community. It was a victory. The books were retained. And I wish that had been the end.

The group that wanted to censor books actually had a float in the fourth of July parade with a washing machine on it and they had signs in bookmarks that said your library is unclean. The mayor lost the next election and eventually all the board members were replaced. And there's been a lot of turnover in the library in the last decade.

In 2014 I was offered a job with ALA to do for others what Angela and Deborah had done for me. I listened and I support library workers who are going through similar experiences of censorship and a tax on their profession, skills, even their humanity. My family moved down to Chicago and we started a new chapter. Even though I'm not working in a library, I still consider myself a librarian. I'm still close friends with my colleague. I still keep in touch with the queer teen whose spoke up in defense of the folks and being represented in such a homophobic community. That day in 2009 changed my life. Today I just hope that I can be of some comfort to others when censorship changes their lives. So thank you, Deborah, for letting me tell my story.

>> Thank you, Kristin, for all that you've done in the last several years to support librarians and thank you for all the bravery you've displayed over the years in fighting censorship. We couldn't literally could not run the office without you. And I deeply appreciate it. I'd like to now talk a little about the Leroy C. merit fund which I mentioned earlier. It's an important resource for ALA members and librarians everywhere who are experiencing discrimination on the job due to their race, gender, sexual identity, or because of disability, age or religion. It also supports librarians who are facing job loss or discrimination due to their defense of intellectual freedom. The fund gives direct grants and aid to librarians experiencing these challenges. Offering immediate financial assistance for legal fees, healthcare premiums, rent or mortgage pages, providing tangible support to sustain them in a difficult time. Again, the merit fund keeps all requests in strict confidence, but we're grad in a recipient is able to talk about
their experiences. Amy Dodson is now director of the fox river valley in Illinois but when she was the director of the Douglas county library in Nevada the merit fund supplied report when she faced a unique and difficult challenge. Can you please join us and share your story.

>> Amy Dodson: Thank you so much. I'm really happy to be here. My experience with censorship started in the summer of 2020 amid the pandemic. As I was the director of the Douglas county public library in northern Nevada. When -- and focus on representation of all community members at their local libraries, I wrote a diversity statement with the help of my staff. The diversity statement included support of the Black Lives Matter movement. I posted the statement on the library's social media in June and within a couple of hours one of the county's deputy district attorneys called and asked me to take it down. He advised me to instead place it on the next boarding meeting agenda. I complied and the board materials were shared with the public in July. Almost immediately county sheriff wrote a public letter to the library threatening to withhold 911 services because we supported Black Lives Matter. As if he could pick and choose who deserves emergency services. And the community back lack was despicable and swift. The sheriff's all right was followed by several hundred emails, letters, post cards and phone calls supporting the sheriff and disparaging the library. The negative and hateful messages came mostly from locals but others, too. This continued for several months. News eventually spread around the world. I personally received death threats, threats to my safety, threats to my family, and I'll share with you my favorite one. My favorite was a post card saying that my entire family hated me for what I had said and it was signed love mom. Apparently my mother could send post cards from beyond the grave because she had died 12 years prior. There was a protest in August after the backlash started and about 20 brave young people representing Black Lives Matter attended the protest and held their heads high as they were greeted by about 2 to 3,000 opposers, many of whom were heavily armed. You imagine how quickly they were chased out of town. It was reminiscent of the images from little rock central high school in 1957.

In response to the diversity statement and the sheriff's letter, many of the county commissioners and administrators supported the sheriff and vowed to withhold funding from the library's future. Rather than help the library staff or me, the library board issued a public statement that distanced themselves from the controversy. Then a majority of the library board voted to launch an investigation into my actions. I was exonerated. So then the county launched their own investigation. Then I was exonerated again. But the community and the majority of the library board never really forgave me. The diversity statement and any topic about equity or diversity
never surfaced again. It was all just buried and ignored.

But now I want to share with you some of the silver linings that emerged from those dreadful clouds of 2020. The library world rallied around me and the library staff and just flooded the library with messages of encouragement, support, and solidarity. We received messages from librarians and library workers from all over the country and even from libraries around the world. I have never felt so proud to be a librarian.

I also had the support of Nevada's attorney general, the Nevada library association, and the ACLU. But most of all, the American library association was by my side from the beginning. I want to wholeheartedly thank Tracy Hall, the office 6 intellectual freedom for their wisdom and support. Deborah Caldwell-Stone reached out and held my hand from start to finish. She's my real hero. I especially want to thank the mare -- to hire an attorney to help protect me and my job. I can't thank them enough.

As Deborah said, I'm now the director of a phenomenal library in the Chicagoland area. I stayed in Douglas county for about a year and left in July, 2021, to come to Illinois. I could not be happier. I'd just like to also thank the letters of encouragement from librarians and library workers and everyone who is here today. Thank you so much for listening and cheering us on. I'm very grateful to be here. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Amy. It was a tough time but I'm so grateful you were willing to take a stand and I'm so grateful to have been able to support you through that experience and I'm glad that you're here in Illinois. And have come through so well. We really appreciate your brave stance in defense of your library staff and in defense of the library users and your community.

I do want to remind you that the merit fund is sustained by donations from individual librarians supporting their own. The fund does depend on your financial support in order to help librarians like Amy. Information about the fund and how to support it is online. Before I return these proceedings back to President Wong I'd like to tell you about a new initiative we will be launching very shortly. Since last October OIF and TPA have been collaborating with member leaders and consultants to launch an initiative to disrupt and defeat the organized national censorship campaign that has been launched against local communities, that's targeting school boards and library boards and targeting local elections. And is weaponizing book bans and using policy and politics at the local and state level to achieve their censorship goals. This initiative will be anchored by a public facing national campaign that will mobilize and unite the library ecosystem with external partners and the general public whom we serve. It will uplift state and local efforts to fight censorship and bring visibility to the support for the freedom to read. We will also reframe the narrative about libraries,
refocusing on libraries as an essential public institution. Finally, we will move libraries, library workers and ALA out of the partisan fray by emphasizing our core values and our leadership as information professionals. And inviting the public to become active defenders of the freedom to read. We will have more to share next week during the PLA conference in Portland, Oregon, when there will be a day long quorum April 25th. There will be programming on preparing your library for today's censorship battles and opportunities to join with colleagues to share resources and build connections in support of intellectual freedom. If you're attending PLA next week, I hope you'll join us. Remember to cons in on April 4th when we'll be sharing the list of most challenged and banned books of 2021 along with numbers and statistics for an extraordinary year of censorship in libraries across the country. The fight to make information available and accessible to everyone is what keeps this profession and all those who practice it relevant and vibrant. Please join us in preserving the freedom to read. Report censorship via the ALA website. Join the freedom to read foundation to support our legal efforts to fight book bans and donate to the fund to sustain its ability to serve librarians in need. When we all come together as one library ecosystem, libraries, library workers, volunteers and associations come together as one voice, we will defeat censorship and we will sustain the freedom to read.

Thank you for this time, Madam President. I'll turn things back over to you.

>> Patricia Wong: Thank you, Deborah. Kristin and Amy, first of all, please -- you have our greatest thanks for both -- thank you both for your incredible stories, your courage and your inspiration. Deborah, thank you so much for these important resources. And thanks to you and the entire office of intellectual freedom, staff and volunteers for all of your important efforts. At this point we would like to open up the meeting for questions to submit a formal question for our presenters, please use the question and answer feature. Of course, please use the public chat to share your thoughts with all participants. Chat texts will not be read out loud. We will have 10 minutes for questions if there are any. Are there any?

>> Madam President, there are no -- oh, one moment. We have a question from one member asking if this webinar will be made available to everyone after today and I can answer that one if you'd like to share that it will be posted on the ALA website. And Madam President, there are no -- okay. One question has come in. The question is, does ALA have any immediate plans to add additional staff resources to the office for intellectual freedom?

>> Thank you for that question. I will turn that over to our executive director.

>> I'm here. I just have to -- I'll have to ask my colleagues if they can open my video because I can't do it. Okay. Thank you
for allowing that. Can you see me?

>> Patricia Wong: Yes, we can see you.

>> Okay. Thank you so much. The answer is just quickly yes. One of the things that we have been able to observe during this period is that now that we have passed the McCarthy era in terms of incidents of censorship, not only are we looking to replace one staff position for a staff number who has departed ALA, we will also be adding a deputy director position, adding another lawyer into the role at the office of intellectual freedom. So we do look forward to expanding our capacity there and also expanding our legal capacity external to ALA staff so that we can deploy a greater number of lawyers across the country who are equipped for libraries and librarians experiencing the kinds of things that we heard today. So yes to both internal capacity growth as well as external capacity growth.

>> Patricia Wong: Thank you so much, Tracy. Are there any other questions?

>> Madam President, I believe the questions that are left staff can take care of in the chat. Thank you.

>> Patricia Wong: Thank you so much. Now we're going to be proceeding on to the resolution that was submitted for discussion resolution calling for student loan forgiveness virtual meeting document number two. Because it's been a little while since we've been in practice doing this, I'm going to ask our parliamentarian to come to the floor to talk about the process of resolution when it comes from the membership meeting. Welcome.

>> Eli Mina: Thank you very much. Just to indicate two or three, the constitution of ALA, article six, section four, says something like this. The association by a vote at the membership meeting may refer any matter to the council with recommendations that may require the council to report on such matters that any specific session of the association. So essentially whatever vote you take today is advisory to council and council then if it passes, then the resolution will need to be considered by council at a subsequent session. That's all I have to offer. There is a bit of a time management issue. We still -- the meeting still needs to be concluded by 12:00 unless there is a motion to extend it under Robert's rules of order for this meeting would need a 2/3 vote, so it's best to conclude the meeting -- to aim to conclude the meeting by 12:00.

>> Professor: We will move with haste and expediency but also with care. Would the mover read only the resolved clause of the resolution calling for student loan -- if you could come to the mic and we will --

>> Well, unfortunately, I am at the mic and I am unfortunately just this moment experiencing some technology problems. I don't know if anybody has the --

>> Patricia Wong: We have it.

>> Great. Perfect. Resolved that the American library
association, ALA, on behalf of its members calls on President Biden to cancel student loan debt for all borrowers.

>> Patricia Wong: Would you like to speak to the resolution? You have a total of two minutes.

>> Yes. Thank you, president Wong and all colleagues. Why are we asking ALA to support student loan cancellation? We need for our association to clearly demonstrate an active commitment to improving working conditions, salaries and other benefits for library workers. Evidence demonstrates that the student debt crisis is racialized and gendered. Advocating for student loan cancellation is not a radical position and it is a library issue. There's substantial evidence that student loan debt helps perpetuate racial wealth, income and achievement gaps and canceling student loan debt will help redress the systemic inequality. Women are disproportionately impacted by student debt. Not only do women come out of college with more debt, they take longer to pay it off because of deeply ingrained pay disparities and lack of access to necessities like paid family leave and affordable childcare. Black women have the highest amount of debt. The NAACP and hundreds of other organizations have made the case and in fact NAACP offers an approach for organizations to answer their call to continue to apply pressure and demand that elected leaders ensure equitable and affordable pathways for education. Comparable professional organizations such as the American psychological association, the National Association of social workers and the national education association agree and have issued strong statements that student loan cancellation is in the best interest of their members. Support for canceling student loan debt directly aligns with ALA's fundamental value of equity, diversity and inclusion as well as diversity as a key action area. ALA already implicitly acknowledges the issue of financial inequality for librarians of color through programs such as spectrum scholarships as well as explicitly recognizing the need --

>> Patricia Wong: Sherry -- 15 seconds.
>> I'm sorry.
>> 15 seconds.

>> Okay. ALA is late to join the voices that support cancellation of student loan debt but it's not too late. Please vote in favor of this resolution. Thank you.

>> Patricia Wong: We will invite discussion at this time. If you would like to speak for or against the resolution, please add your name in the Q&A along with a note indicating if you are in favor or opposed to the resolution. So we're going to invite two speakers for the -- to speak for the resolution and then two because of time against the resolution before calling for a vote. The first speaker will have 30 seconds to speak for or against the resolution.

>> Thank you, Madam President. We'd like to invite Stephanie Kramer to come in in favor. Marsha, if you can go ahead and invite
her to unmute. Stephanie, you're unmuted.

>> HI. Thank you. I think I misunderstood. I apologize for the misunderstanding. I am in favor, but I did not prepare any speaking points in favor of this particular resolution. I would be happy to yield my speaking time to the next speaker.

>> All right. Thanks, Stephanie.

>> Patricia Wong: Go ahead. We'll take two in favor and then two against.

>> Next will be Julie Winkle stein.

>> Patricia Wong: Welcome, Julie.

>> Sorry. I had to figure out how to unmute. I also did not prepare comments, but I think it's pretty self-explanatory. I think an excellent job was done of presenting. If you read this, I can't imagine why you would object to it. It has a huge impact on women in particular, on people of color, and it's I think something that ALA should take a position on. Sorry, I'm usually more articulate. Read it and vote for it.

>> Patricia Wong: I see many, many in favor. For the sake of time, do I have anyone who is against this resolution? If you could come forward.

>> Jennifer, I see your hand raised. If you can put in chat if you're planning to speak against the resolution. Okay. If we can go ahead and unmute Jennifer, please, speaking against the resolution.

>> Patricia Wong: Welcome, Jennifer.

>> Hello. Member of ALA for over 30 years. I still am paying school loans because of the previous administration did not recognize the public service loan forgiveness program. However, it is now being recognized and it is being codified through Congress and will be recognized. And so there are -- I mean, it would be great if my loans could be forgiven, but ALA has so many things, so many things that they have to focus in on that to add the loan forgiveness as an agenda item that they have to speak to congressional and executive branch to talk about this along with the freedom of expression and everything else. I think that the use of the Washington office, because this is asking the people in DC to do loan forgiveness, and I really don't think ALA should be putting their initiatives towards this. There is a service. The public loan forgiveness that does exist that you can apply for and that is there for you. I believe in the sentiment. I would love to get my loans forgiven, but I really don't think ALA should be spending their Goodwill in addressing this. Thank you.

>> Patricia Wong: Okay. I have heard from staff that we do not have another opposition that's been against the resolution that's been listed in Q&A. Which is kind of the process we're using. So I am -- okay. All right. Thank you, everyone, for your comments. Before we open this for a vote, I want to share a few details. The
vote will be conducted using a zoom poll. So when the poll is
launched, and we're familiar with Zoom, so hopefully this will work
out very well. Only ALA members are able to vote. So if you are
not a current ALA member, please do not vote. Secondly, if this does
pass, it will be a recommendation to council and will appear on the
council agenda for annual conference. So this is not the end of it.
Staff, before we activate the vote, I want to pause and ensure that
there are no further questions.

>> President Wong, there are no questions at this time.

>> Patricia Wong: Okay. We will proceed to the vote. Members,
please indicate your vote in the zoom poll when it opens on your
screen. It says VMD number 2 resolution calling for student loan
forgiveness. Single choice. And so just press and then hit submit.

>> 90 seconds.

>> Patricia Wong: Once again, resolve that the American
library -- to cancel student loan debt for all borrowers. And thank
you, members, for voting using the zoom poll.

>> 30 seconds left. 15 seconds. Five, four, three, and time
is up.

>> Patricia Wong: Thank you much. I will now ask ALA staff to
close the vote and read the results.

>> Madam President for resolution calling for student loan
debt cancellation VMD number two, 81% of members voted yes. 13% voted
no. 6% abstained. The motion carries.

>> Patricia Wong: Thank you very much. Thank you for bringing
that forward. So that will go to council. I have a few
announcements before we conclude today. It's election season at ALA
and voting was opened on Monday. All of you should have received
your election ballot. ALA's ability to navigate this change is
highly dependent upon the members who lead the organization and I
encourage you all to participate. Take a few minutes and cast your
vote. The election will close on April 6th. I also want to remind
you that your ALA membership includes some webinars. Tools to help
you deal with the emotional fallout of book challenges. Thank you,
everyone, for your participation. We have reached then of our time.
I hope you found this to be a beneficial experience. Thank you to
the membership committee, to Maggie Farrell, Tracy hall, Debra
Caldwell stone, Kristin, Amy Dodson and all who took the time to join
us today. I also want to thank all of the ALA staff who helped produce
this meeting. And an archive of today's meeting will be available
on ALA's website in a few days and we look forward to reconnecting
with all of you at ALA if not sooner. This meeting now stands
adjourned. However, the public chat will remain open for a few
minutes for those who want to finish their discussion. And thank
you all so much for coming today.

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