

ROUGHLY EDITED COPY

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ALA MIDWINTER CONFERENCE

ALA COUNCIL II MEETING

TUESSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2007 - 9:15 a.m. - 12:56 p.m.

WASHINGTON CONVENTION CENTER, ROOM 6B/6C

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

CAPTIONING PROVIDED BY:

CAPTION FIRST, INC.

P.O. BOX 1924

Lombard, IL 60148

1-800-825-5234

* * * * *

This is being provided in a rough-draft format.

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is provided in
Order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a
totally verbatim record of the proceedings

resolution is sent, including the whereas clauses, which of course make many references to ALA policies that have already been adopted.

>> LESLIE BURGER: That is correct. Okay. We're ready? No further discussion. We will proceed to the vote.

Will all those in favor please raise one of your hands? Will all those opposed please raise one of your hands? All right. It looks like we're going to have to count. All those in favor, would you please stand? Okay. You may be seated. And will those opposed please stand? You may be seated. The motion is defeated. There were 98 opposed and 48 in favor. Please mark your ballot Council Document Number 34.

I'm sorry. Microphone Number 7.

>> BETH BOYSON: I'm the Montana Chapter Councilor. A lot of people mentioned they might abstain. Did we call for that?

>> LESLIE BURGER: I don't think we have to. The decision was clear.

I now refer you to ALA Council Document Number 35, Resolution for Impeachment of President George W. Bush. I invite Al Kagan to come to the microphone and read only the "Resolved" clause.

>> Point of order. Dale Ross, Iowa Chapter Councilor. Madame Chair, I believe that this resolution is well outside the

purview of this organization and wish it to be ruled not germane. Thank you.

>> LESLIE BURGER: I am unwilling to make that ruling and so I am going to put it back to the assembly and ask you to tell me if you think it is or is not outside the purview of this organization. Those who believe that it is outside of the purview of this organization, please signify by raising one of your hands. Those who believe that it is within the purview of this organization, please raise your one of your hands. It's clear that most of you feel that it is not within the purview of this organization to discuss this resolution, so I will rule that we will not discuss it.

Wait just a second. Do we mark our ballots?

>> Personal privilege? Isn't this censorship? This is censorship and I'm ashamed of this Association for voting it for censorship.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Okay. Microphone Number 3.

>> MICHAEL GORMAN: Immediate Past President. I agree with Bernadine Hoduski that this is censorship. And we have a procedure of Resolutions Committee and resolutions are sent to that committee. And it is part of their job to insure that a resolution is a fitting thing to be put before the Council.

Since they have done that, I believe it is ipso facto something

that can be debated.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 2.

>> MONIKA ANTONELLI: Councilor-At-Large and also Chair of the Resolutions Committee. I want to bring to the attention of the Council that this resolution was brought to our attention by membership. This is a resolution that was brought to us by membership. And as a Councilor-At-Large who represents membership, I think we need to discuss this.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 4.

>> SYLVIA TURCHYN: Intellectual Freedom Round Table. This is my first year on Council and I must say on behalf of the intellectual freedom community that I am speechless by this Council voting to prevent speech at this assembly.

(Applause.)

I think it's very important, critical to the health of this organization that you hear properly presented resolutions and vote on them accordingly. But to prevent that is appalling. And it is censorship and I am embarrassed.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Microphone Number 6.

>> THADDEUS BEJNAR: New Mexico Chapter Councilor. With regard to the point that this resolution was ruled germane by the Resolutions Committee, the Council has the ability and the authority to overrule decisions of the Resolutions Committee.

So that in and of itself does not constitute being germane.

Thank you.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thanks. Microphone Number 2.

>> JACKIE GRIFFIN: Chapter Councilor from California and I want to admit to not paying good enough attention when I raised my hand. I do think that this resolution is out of our range; however, I think it should be discussed. And so I don't know. I can't withdraw my vote, but I make a motion that we discuss this issue and then I'll vote against it.

(Laughter.)

>> Point of order?

>> LESLIE BURGER: Who is speaking? Thank you. Microphone Number 4.

>> BERNARD MARGOLIS: Councilor-At-Large. Am I not correct in assessing that this discussion is in fact out of order? The Chair has made a ruling. If we're not happy with it, someone could rise to appeal the decision of the Chair, which I think would be the proper way of proceeding.

>> LESLIE BURGER: I'm being advised by the parliamentarian that if we put it to a vote, there is no appeal.

>> I have a point of order as well.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Microphone Number 2.

>> JANET SWAN HILL: Executive Board. What we put to a vote

was an opinion not a motion. We simply expressed our opinion as to whether or not we thought this was germane or not. That was not a vote should we discuss it or not. Had we had that sort of a motion, people might indeed have voted differently.

I believe we do ourselves far more harm as an organization not to discuss this than we do by discussing it.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Okay. In the spirit of flexibility, I am going to rule that we can discuss this motion.

(Applause.)

And I will invite Councilor Kagan to come up to the microphone to read the "Resolved" clause.

>> ALFRED KAGAN: Thank you. One of the nice things about moving around the country is that we get to new places and we find people who have not participated in ALA before who want to participate now. This was a grassroots effort, and I'm going to defer to our seconder, Jonathan Betz-Zall Washington State Councilor, to introduce this resolution.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Microphone Number 3.

>> JONATHAN BETZ-ZALL: Washington Chapter Councilor. I will read the "Resolved" clauses.

"Resolved that the American Library Association considers that George W. Bush by such conduct warrants impeachment.

"Resolved that this resolution be forwarded to the

President of the United States, all members of Congress, the press and others as appropriate."

The issue in this case for me as has already been mentioned representation and the support of members in their efforts to participate in ALA whether or not they are elected Councilors.

As was mentioned, this resolution was generated at the local level, not by ALA insiders. Members brought it to the Social Responsibilities Round Table at New Orleans, and I took it on because there's no at large Councilor from Washington state to represent them.

The initial resolution was not phrased in library language, so I and several others worked with that group to revise it and you see the result in the first eight whereas clauses, all of which relate to established ALA policy and positions.

So here are members trying to involve themselves in ALA using the methods that ALA provides. I would like us to send them a message: When you want ALA to speak on a national issue, Council will respond.

And here's what they had to say. We don't bring this resolution to the ALA lightly. We understand that the ALA taking such a position would be unprecedented. So why now? And why us? Because the ALA's core values are facing a danger that's unprecedented in the history of our country. The

standards for impeachment are grave abuses of power and subversion of the Constitution. Are the points addressed in the resolution grave abuses of power that subvert the Constitution or not? If they are, our first responsibility is to the public we serve and our overall responsibility is to our core values.

The reality demands that we put aside political pragmatism and rise above our pressing immediate concerns to boldly say what we know, and the office of President must be held accountable for and prevented from further dismantling the Constitution. History will judge us sharply should we fail to act decisively.

And I want to add the membership may judge us if we fail to act on this. This will be coming back at membership meeting at Annual.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 4.

>> JULIE CUMMINS: Councilor-At-Large. I have a question to clarify the path of this resolution. The Chair of the Resolutions Committee referred to it coming from membership, yet we don't have membership meetings at Midwinter. So is this coming from summer?

>> LESLIE BURGER: I'm going to call on Microphone Number 3 to answer the question.

>> JONATHAN BETZ-ZALL: Yes, the original version of this

resolution was brought to ALA at New Orleans, and they were referred to the Social Responsibilities Round Table as the appropriate place to bring it. And then I took it on with a group in Seattle to develop it further and bring it forth through SRRT here. Does that clarify things? This is membership acting through their representatives.

>> LESLIE BURGER: I'm sorry, Monika, I didn't see you back at Microphone 2. Do you have something to add?

>> Just that it has been moved and seconded by two Councilors.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 4.
Microphone Number 4.

>> ELIZABETH BINGHAM: Councilor-At-Large. I'm horrified that this is coming about. As with the earlier action, this is not what we are in the business about. This is an affront. Personal opinion is something else, but for the American Library Association to even consider something like this irritates me and the members -- and we were talking about our growth in membership and attendance at conference and something like this. This is going back to the perception of what ALA had turned into 30 some odd years ago. And many, many people were disgusted about this type of oversight of government and that this is not the role of a professional association. And as I say, I am so

upset about this that we would take deliberative time to consider this that I don't really and truly know if I want to be associated with this Association if this is the type of information that we are leading and giving out to the public. It destroys, you know, my credibility of what I've always supported with the American Library Association and a pride of membership and of serving to give information to the people. So things like this can affect membership, participation in committees and attendance at conference. And I think that's what we need to be thinking about and go back to what we're really all about. Thank you.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Microphone Number 6.

>> BERNADINE ABBOTT HODUSKI: I was around 30 years ago when we did the resolution against the Vietnam War, it's the same sort of situation. You might notice that every time something like this comes up, the Social Responsibilities Round Table membership grows. But I'm not for --

(Applause.)

But I am not for this resolution. I'm not for trying to impeach the President, not because he doesn't deserve to be impeached --

(Laughter.)

-- but because that I think it would suck the life out of

the Congress. I was a Congressional staffer when they tried to impeach President Clinton. It stopped everything. It used up a lot of energy. I want to see the Congress do some positive things.

But on the other hand, I do not want to stifle the rights of the membership to bring any issue that they consider relevant. And it's their decision to decide what's relevant. They elected us. So if 50% of my constituents want it and 50% don't, I want to have the opportunity to present that and other people. And it disturbs me the trend toward self-censorship. I've seen enough of that in libraries in my career as a 40 year career -- 50 years, I've been working in libraries since I was 14. So I don't want to go back to those years.

So you don't like the resolution, vote against it. Give your reasons. But don't stifle my right to vote and to bring forward anything that my constituents want brought forward.

(Applause.)

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 4.

>> ROBERTA STEVENS: Executive Board. I ask a question of the individuals or groups that brought this forward. Have you thought about who becomes President if in fact George Bush was impeached?

(Laughter.)

(Applause.)

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you, Roberta, for bringing that to our attention. It's a sobering thought indeed.

Microphone Number 5.

>> CAROLYN RAWLES-HEISER: Oregon Chapter Councilor. That was actually one of the main points I wanted to make. I'd like to thank the Councilor from California for bringing us to having a debate on this. I did vote originally that it was not germane but didn't realize that that was going to totally cut off debate because I think we should talk about this.

I think this is really extreme. I don't think Congress has even gone this far. I don't want Congress tied up the next two years on this issue. And this is not the type of thing that I can go back to my chapter with a straight face and explain if I vote for it. I'm not a fan of the current administration by any stretch, but my role as a Chapter Councilor, I don't think that it's my job to support this type of resolution.

And if this had come out -- this came out of meetings in New Orleans. I'm just curious as to why we didn't get anything about this ahead of time. Maybe I missed it. But I'd really like to get these resolutions ahead of time so that I can go to my chapter and get some information from them as to how they think I should vote. So in the future I'd request that we get

this farther ahead of time and not at Council.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 2.

>> JACKIE GRIFFIN: Chapter Councilor of California. I do want to second that. It would really help, especially us Chapter Councilors, if we got these things enough ahead of time so that we could represent. I don't actually know where my membership would be on this in truth because I didn't have time to ask them.

But first of all I want to say I stand second to no one in my absolute hatred of this administration. I was having a conversation with a friend the other day and I was asserting that Nixon was a worse president and I suddenly realized I don't believe that anymore. And that was a huge loss for me. I have spent my entire adult life with that position and now I'm sort of in a bad place.

But I want to reassert what I said before. When someone walks into my library and they're considering the idea of impeachment, I don't want them to think that we have a position. I want them to think that we have all the resources in the world for them to develop a position.

I do not want them to think that our position has somehow affected how we select our materials or where we will guide them or where we will lead them to. As an individual, I have asked

my Congress people to please impeach this man. And I'll help you on any other basis. But I do not want the professional association, the one in this country that is devoted to the idea of free and total access to information of whatever you need to research, to take positions that chills that information. I cannot stretch that too much.

I would ask that we not adopt these kind of things, that we find a way to work in other ways towards this that allows everyone -- if someone came here with a resolution to support the President in all of his actions, I would be equally -- I would be more appalled -- but I love this conversation. And I have to say I was saying to the person sitting next to me, I have not enjoyed a Council conversation the way I have this one. And I have had to really think through what I'm saying and what I believe and whether or not my idea about intellectual freedom -- Janet said something about balancing the needs. And this is true. We have a President who has done the Patriot Act, which limits things. So it is a complicated and complex issue. I ask that you bring them earlier. I ask that you think what it says to our public about who we are, what we are and what our principal mission is and I want to thank you all for this conversation this morning.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 3.

>> SUE KAMM: Councilor-At-Large. First of all, I repeat what I said when I spoke against the earlier resolution. But there are two other points that I'd like to make. First of all, if the President is impeached, that doesn't necessarily mean he's removed from office. He has to pass -- I believe the Senate would sit as a trial body. And if they vote to remove him out of office, he's out of office. Bill Clinton was impeached.

Secondly, if I remember the U.S. Constitution correctly, the grounds for impeachment of a President are high crimes and misdemeanors. And I don't think stupidity appears under that category.

(Laughter.)

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 3.

>> JOHN DESANTIS: Councilor-At-Large. This is an important national issue and I'd like to first commend Councilors Kagan and Betz-Zall for their excellent work in preparing the resolution. I think if you look over the several whereas clauses, you can see how relevant this resolution is to our organization. ALA's an important national body with a strong voice and an opportunity to send an equally strong message. I urge support for this resolution.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 6.

>> ANDREA MORRISON: Councilor-At-Large. I welcome the opportunity to speak on this issue; however, I am against this issue. I have been approached by personal members and officers of this organization who told me that they would drop ALA membership if this resolution were to pass.

And I haven't heard -- as a Councilor-At-Large, I represent the constituents back home and in south central Indiana, a naval base is one of our largest employers. And I don't feel that libraries in south central Indiana would be effectively serving our users if the military personnel there, if the Department of Defense libraries, if their families couldn't come to libraries without knowing that we passed this resolution. I think it would polarize the public against us. And I haven't heard anyone talk about ROTC personnel or other personnel. And I think that's a serious issue. I mean, we represent those librarians, too. We represent those users, too.

I am appalled at the problems with the policies of this administration. However, there are things that I oppose that aren't mentioned in this resolution, including the No Child Left Behind Act which I think does affect libraries. And I would support discussions, resolutions that refer to specific things that do affect our libraries. Our school libraries are terribly

affected by No Child Left Behind. Our children aren't being served. This is not going to help the membership. I speak out against it.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 2.

>> DIEDRE CONKLING: Councilor-At-Large. I first want to point out to Council that impeachment does not mean removal from office. I trust that you're able to look up more about what it does mean.

I do think this resolution is about upholding our Constitution, which is something that ALA is very good at doing.

Since it's obvious that even we as Councilors do not understand what impeachment is, then I think that we should embrace this as an opportunity for us to have a conversation about how our Constitution and laws work and that every person in this country, including the President and all of those in political offices, must follow the laws of our country.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 2.

>> JANET SWAN HILL: Executive Board. First I would like to congratulate the body on the brief gut check we had earlier that made us realize that if we are an organization about intellectual freedom and freedom of expression, we should at least be able to discuss these matters. That said, I'm going to vote against this resolution, even though I desperately would

like the man out of office.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Microphone Number 7.

>> THERESE BIGELOW: Councilor-At-Large. I want to to tell you I haven't spoken in my seven years in conference because it's very hard for me to stand up here and say "at large."

So setting that aside, I've had to do my own examination of conscience as to why my hand went up so quickly earlier and I realized that because in many ways to me impeachment is a form of censorship. I've seen it misused. I've studied it misused in history. And that's why I have a hard time with this resolution.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 4.

>> Pam Sieving: RUSA Councilor. I am also a member of the membership meeting committee and I hope that the discussion at the beginning of this topic reminds us all of the importance of the membership meetings as we struggle to reintegrate those with our actions but with the caveat that was raised earlier that we let the membership speak. Still it's a great opportunity for us to be able to act on their will later.

Because of the importance of this issue, I have to repeat the statement I read earlier to explain my vote later.

It is the consensus of the RUSA Board that ALA should

address issues directly affecting libraries or members and those we serve.

It is the consensus of the RUSA Board that this resolution is not concerned with such an issue, either.

And that my vote against this resolution is in that context rather than an expression of support or lack of support for the ideas expressed in this resolution by this Councilor, by the RUSA Board members and RUSA members individually. Thank you again for letting me speak.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 5.

>> ANNE HOFMANN: New York Chapter Councilor. Well, I also am no fan of our current President and will be upset this evening as I listen to the State of the Union message at some of his strange ideas that are bringing this country down.

I need to say that I feel it's inappropriate for these political resolutions to come before ALA.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 4.

>> NAN BLAINE HILYARD: Member of the Executive Board I was kind of concerned by a comment made earlier from my Councilor who said that she has heard from constituents or ALA members saying they will drop their membership if we pass this kind of resolution. And I think that that makes those people out to be rather fair weather members of the Association.

That said, I, too, am opposed to this resolution because I don't think it's going to advance our cause.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 6.

>> ELIZABETH ANN RIDLER: Councilor-At-Large. I don't want to repeat all the things I said on the previous resolution. I think all of us have made up our minds which way we want to vote. I congratulate people on being civilized in the discussion. But I really would like to suggest that the vote be called so we can go on to the other resolution on the floor.

>> Point of order?

>> LESLIE BURGER: Point of order at Microphone 6.

>> I would like to call the vote. I would like to ask for a vote about calling.

>> LESLIE BURGER: The point of order takes precedence. Microphone Number 6.

>> THADDEUS BEJNAR: New Mexico Chapter Councilor. Procedurally I'm not entirely sure exactly where we are, but I believe we may have agreed to suspend the rules to discuss the resolution, but that the vote on whether or not it was germane is still in effect. So that a vote on the motion itself would be improper.

>> LESLIE BURGER: According to Eli, it would take a long time to explain this, but it's okay for us to vote on the

notion.

(Laughter.)

This is in the category of "trust us."

(Laughter.)

>> Point of order.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Point of order at Microphone 7?

>> MICHAEL GOLRICK: Councilor-At-Large. And I believe that Councilor Ridler asked to call the question -- moved to close debate but it was after she spoke to the item. So I believe that I'm going to ask that you consider ruling that action out of order.

>> LESLIE BURGER: You are correct and I will rule it out of order, although I'm afraid to rule anything at this point.

(Laughter.)

And I will just take a moment to say that I shouldn't have done what I did. So I have learned that I will never stifle debate in this body again. You have my commitment to do that.

(Applause.)

Microphone Number 2.

>> JUNE PINNELL-STEPHENS: Executive Board. I'm going to vote against this resolution. He's going to be gone in two years, anyway. And in the meantime, Congress could actually be loing some good for us instead of going through endless hoops

discussing it.

So I'm going to vote against this resolution. I am very pleased that we were given the opportunity to discuss this resolution. And as for shutting off debate, I never vote to close debate for the same reason: You never know when somebody's going to get up and say something you need to hear.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 4?

>> THERESA TOBIN: Councilor-At-Large. And I stand in favor of the resolution but I wanted to respond to the "why now" with just two out of his eight years left. I think it is important that the Congress be asked to call into question whether or not our President's actions have been constitutional. I think he has aggregated an incredible amount of power into his part of the government, and the American people deserve a ruling that says no, the balance of powers have not been kept. So that the next President does not inherit the power that he has aggregated into his office.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Thank you. Microphone Number 5.

>> JAMES CASEY: Councilor-At-Large. I move to close debate.

>> Second.

>> LESLIE BURGER: Then we will take a vote to close debate.

All those in favor, please raise your hand by -- please raise

one of your hands. I'm sorry. All those opposed? The debate is closed.

Okay. We will move to the motion. Will all those in favor of the motion please raise one of your hands? Will all those -- thank you. You can put your hands down. Would all those opposed please raise one of your hands? The motion fails. Thank you.

Please mark your ballot Council Document Number 35.

Okay. I now refer you to ALA Council Document Number 36. A resolution on the Boy Scouts of America. Would Councilor Deidre Conkling please go to the microphone and read only the "Resolved" clause. Microphone number 2.

>> DIEDRE CONKLING: Councilor-At-Large. "Resolved that the American Library Association call upon all its units to follow ALA policies and to suspend all affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America National Council until such time as the Boy Scouts of America ends its exclusionary policy on the basis of a person's religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

"And be it further resolved that ALA once again strongly urge, as was done in Midwinter 1999, the Boy Scouts of America National Council to rescind its decision to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and/or religious beliefs so that it demonstrates a commitment to Human Rights, inclusiveness and