

ALA Committee on Legislation
Report of Plans, Activities and Accomplishments
February 24, 2014

The Committee on Legislation (COL) conducted monthly conference calls leading up to the retreat sessions and business meetings at Midwinter 2014. The retreat discussions focused on long term priorities and the functioning of COL, its subcommittees and Legislation Assembly. The agenda for the business meetings targeted more specific policy and legislative issues, especially those raised by proposed resolutions. The monthly conference calls, primarily a forum for updates from the COL subcommittees, Legislation Assembly and OGR staff, provide regular updates on issues and activities; no decisions or votes are made on these calls. The COL subcommittees and Legislation Assembly also had numerous conference calls in recent months.

COL's activities at MW14 are detailed in the "COL Report to Council – January 28, 2014", CD # 20 presented at Council III in Philadelphia. That document includes the "Washington Office Six Month Report" outlining the highlights of recent OGR activities as well.

• Accomplishments:

- Extensively discussed and completed several resolutions for Council consideration: CD 20.1 on Curbing Government Surveillance & Restoring Civil Liberties; CD 20.2 on "Expanding Federal Whistleblower Protections," CD 20.3 on "Maintaining Government Websites During a Government Shutdown," and a resolution "Honoring Senator John D. Rockefeller for his support of American's Libraries." Members of COL also worked on a memorial resolution honoring former Congressional Representative, Major Owens. All resolutions were passed by Council.
- Agreed to revitalization and expansion of the federal legislative advocates network;
- Received interim report from the Federal Depository Library Program Taskforce;
- Conducted a Open Dialog session at MW14 involving over 80 participants discussing issues surrounding a national preservation plan from the FLDP TF report;
- Reviewed preliminary results of advocates survey conducted by consultant, Stephanie Vance;
- Assessed and discussed reports from COL subcommittees, Legislation Assembly and OGR staff;

• Planned activities:

- Advance project on federal legislative advocates network with specific assignments for members and OGR staff;
- Monitor all key issues and best ways to keep COL and others up-to-date;
- Review orientation process for new COL members and adjust as appropriate;
- Work Session (optional) in Washington, D.C. prior to NLLD in May to edit orientation manual for COL consideration;
- Assess COL meeting schedule and adapt as feasible;
- Work with COL Grassroots Subcommittee on analysis of advocates' survey and develop action plan in response to its implications;
- Continue with monthly conference calls and posted call notes.-March 12, April 9, May 14 and June 11;
- Finalize details and implement COL program at Annual.

• Issues that affect the committee's work and their implications for the future:

- Political environment paralyzing congressional legislative action on key issues;

- Recession cuts to library resources at all levels of government;
 - Challenges in recruiting library advocates;
 - A key OGR lobbying position, vacated in January of 2013, has not been posted or filled (while other ALA positions have been). This impacts the work of the committee as well as the work of the WO OGR;
 - Concern that all appropriate resolutions are forwarded to COL from the Committee on Resolutions;
 - New conference schedule makes adequate committee meeting time difficult. With much work to be done longer meeting slots need to be provided.
- Interactions with other units within ALA:
 - Conducted joint meeting with IFC;
 - COL appointed three people to participate in the IFC Privacy Subcommittee to determine if COL should re-establish its own privacy subcommittee;
 - High participation by units in Legislation Assembly continues; discussions moving forward on if/how to make LA more effective;
 - Outreach to other ALA units by the COL Grassroots Subcommittee to promote Mobile Commons;
 - Working through the COL FDLP Task Force, reached out to all ALA divisions and round tables for feedback on the TF report and the survey questions developed from the report.
- Relationship of the committee's work to the ALA strategic plan:
 - COL directly addresses key areas of ALA's mission and goals and provides background, guidance, appropriate vetting and recommendations on key policy and legislative issues;
 - The work of COL relates directly to many of the objectives under Goal Area : Advocacy, Funding, and Public policy as well as some of the objectives under the other 4 Goal areas;
 - COL, in conjunction with its subcommittees, Legislation Assembly and staff in OGR, supports and helps equip library advocates and provides ongoing oversight, review and analysis of key policy and legislative issues that impact library and information services;
 - COL, working with OGR staff, provides a broad range of resources and information about issues and the advocacy process for members and other library supporters;
 - COL addresses a range of issues that support education and lifelong learning, equitable access, diversity and community engagement.
- Current level of committee members' involvement (more substantive than an attendance roll):
 - All current members of the Committee on Legislation are actively involved with the work of the committee. Each COL member is also a member of at least one COL subcommittee and, in some cases, serves as the chair of the subcommittee;
 - COL members also involved with the FDLP TF;
 - COL holds monthly conference calls which have high participation, often close to 100%;
 - One member of COL this year had to resign due to work restrictions.
- Committee self-check on its value and viability:
 - The complex nature of the policies and legislation that must be addressed by COL require a mix of experienced and new members. All members need to be hard workers and fully participatory on this committee;
 - Consider new subcommittee to develop networks of advocates on specific federal legislative issues;

- Review all COL subcommittee charges and activity is conducted yearly;
 - Assure that all appropriate resolutions are forwarded to COL from the Committee on Resolutions.
- Other issues of each committee's own devising:
 - COL is concerned that conference meeting schedules are not adequate to meet the need for full discussion, especially for complex and contentious issues and resolutions where broad discussion is necessary for membership involvement;
 - A key OGR lobbying position, vacated in January of 2013, has not been posted or filled (while other ALA positions have been). This impacts the work of the committee as well as the work of the WO OGR.

Submitted by;
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Chair
ALA Committee on Legislation