

American Library Association

Washington Office Newsline

ALAWON
Volume 16, Number 047
April 18, 2007

LIBRARIAN Act of 2007 introduced in Congress

Yesterday, coinciding with National Library Workers Day, the Librarian Incentive to Boost Recruitment and Retention in Areas of Need (LIBRARIAN) Act of 2007 was introduced in both the U.S. Senate (S. 1121) and the House of Representatives (H.R. 1877).

This bill amends the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for Perkins student loan forgiveness, which will encourage individuals to become and remain librarians in low-income schools and public libraries.

"The LIBRARIAN Act of 2007 is a bold step forward for librarianship," ALA President Leslie Burger said. "With the face of information changing on an almost daily basis, bills like this do a great service to one of the world's most respected professions, attracting a younger and more diverse crowd with extensive knowledge of the hi-tech services offered in today's libraries."

"Further, many of today's librarians are nearing retirement age," Burger continued, "and we as a society must do all we can to ensure that every library continues to be staffed by librarians skilled in both their profession and their community."

The bipartisan bill was introduced in the House by Rep. Becerra (D-CA), along with Reps. Grijalva (D-AZ), Ehlers (R-MI), and Shimkus (R-IL), and in the Senate by Sens. Reed (D-RI) and Cochran (R-MS).

"Librarians play an essential role in our schools and public libraries and help to foster a lifelong love of reading in our young people," stated Sen. Reed. "With a shortage of librarians across the country and with many more set to retire, we must urgently encourage more people to enter the library science field and work to retain valuable librarians who are already serving our communities."

Said Rep. Becerra, "The loan forgiveness provisions of this bill will be a valuable tool in attracting some of our brightest and best students to become tomorrow's educators in the communities where they are most needed."

The American Library Association strongly supports the LIBRARIAN Act of 2007 and encourages Senators and Representatives to cosponsor it.

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Current law allows for the forgiveness of educational loans for several categories of professionals that serve in low-income areas, such as teachers for Title I schools, special education and Head Start, as well as members of the armed services, law enforcement officers, Peace Corps volunteers, medical technicians and nurses.



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