

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: *Report on Washington Office Activities*

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
For information purposes. No actions requested.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
No action requested.

CONTACT PERSON:
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DRAFT OF MOTION:
None.

DATE: *October 1, 2013*

BACKGROUND: The report provides information on recent ALA Washington Office initiatives and projects.

Attachments: Executive Board Report on Washington Office Activities

OFFICE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY (OITP)

ALA Launches “Authors for Library E-books” Campaign

In June, Maureen Sullivan, currently ALA’s immediate past president, announced the launch of “[Authors for Library Ebooks](#),” a new initiative that asks authors to stand with libraries in their quest for equitable access to e-books. Bestselling authors Cory Doctorow, Ursula K. Le Guin and Jodi Picoult are helping to kick off the campaign. The campaign represents an extension of ALA’s advocacy strategy to ensure all people have access to the world’s knowledge and literature through our nation’s libraries—regardless of format. Developed by the ALA’s [Digital Content & Libraries Working Group](#), the campaign encourages authors to sign on to a statement of shared values, to discuss the issue with their publishers, and raise awareness of their concerns through their websites, social media and other communications channels.

OITP Talks Ebooks with Publishers

In late September, Barbara Sullivan led an ALA delegation to New York to meet with publishers and others in the publishing ecosystem; the delegation includes Maureen Sullivan, Keith Michael Fiels, DCWG Co-chair Robert Wolven and Alan S. Inouye.

ALA Leads Libraries on E-rate Reform

In June, President Obama announced the ConnectED initiative, which aims to connect America’s students to high-capacity broadband and high-speed wireless. “ALA is encouraged by President Obama’s announcement of the ConnectED initiative to ensure that libraries and schools have access to robust, affordable high-capacity broadband for many years to come,” said Maureen Sullivan. “School and public libraries provide rich opportunities for students to actively engage and collaborate with peers and mentors using increasingly varied technology tools.” The current funding cap on the E-rate program consistently falls far short of meeting basic demand for broadband-enabled services, and technology trends show needs and future capabilities for libraries and schools are only growing.

In July, Maine State Librarian Linda Lord called for a “proactive vision for meeting the educational and learning needs of our communities for the next 15 years and beyond” at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. Representing our nation’s 16,400 public libraries, Lord touted the success of the E-rate program in helping connect nearly 100 percent of libraries to serve more than 30 million people every week. The hearing came before the Federal Communications Commission released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to modernize the E-rate program to support high-speed broadband for digital learning technologies and ensure all students, educators and library patrons have the tools they need to succeed in the 21st-century.

In September, ALA asked the Federal Communications Commission to accelerate deployment of the high-capacity broadband needed to serve students and learners of all ages through our nation’s libraries and schools. ALA calls for new E-rate funding to jumpstart and sustain high-capacity broadband connections that support digital learning and economic development through libraries and schools. Read the ALA proposal: http://www.districtdispatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/ALA_E-rate_Comments.pdf.

Library Copyright Alliance Hails WIPO for Landmark Victory for the Blind

In June, the Library Copyright Alliance applauded the World Intellectual Property Organization for finalizing the Treaty for the Blind, a treaty that will allow nations to share or make accessible copies for the print disabled in other countries, who more often than not, have little access to reading materials. The Treaty for the Blind creates a copyright exception and makes it legal to share accessible print copies with other nations. Before the landmark decision, antiquated international copyright laws made it difficult for developing nations—where 90 percent of the world’s 285 million blind live—to convert print materials into Braille books, audio recordings, or accessible digital files. As a result of the treaty, the diversity of content available to the blind will increase dramatically around the world. The Library Copyright Alliance is made up of the ALA, the Association of College and Research Libraries and the Association of Research Libraries. Read the full treaty: <http://www.ip-watch.org/weblog/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/WIPO-Dipl-Conf-Adopted-Draft-Treaty-June-2013.pdf>.

Google, ALA Host Webinar: Revisiting CIPA 10 Years Later

In July, the American Library Association and Google, Inc., hosted a national symposium where library, education, technology, legal and policy experts considered the impact of the Children’s Internet Protection Act on access to electronic information. Participants joined a wide range of experts to discuss insights looking at legal, ethical, and political implications of how the CIPA requirements have been implemented in the past 10 years. “Revisiting the Children’s Internet Protection Act: 10 Years Later” was part of the Office for Information Technology Policy and Office for Intellectual Freedom’s larger project on CIPA and access to information, made possible through support of Google, Inc. A white paper will be released this fall. <http://www.districtdispatch.org/2013/08/diverse-contributors-revisit-cipa-10-years-later/>.

ALA Task Force Releases Recommendations to Advance Digital Literacy

The ALA Digital Literacy Task Force (which is led by the Office for Information Technology Policy) released its [recommendations](#) to advance and sustain library engagement in digital literacy initiatives nationwide. These recommendations build on the January 2013 Task Force report “Digital Literacy, Libraries, and Public Policy” and constitute a call to action on the part of the ALA, library education programs, front-line librarians, various funding bodies, and the diverse stakeholders who use and support library services. These conclusions and recommendations culminate the Task Force’s work over 18 months and include comments from several public programs held at ALA conferences, as well as two online virtual public programs and task force meetings that included observers from different stakeholder groups.

ALA Submits Comments to the FCC Opposing the E-reader Accessibility Exemption

ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy submitted comments to the FCC in response to a petition from the E-reader Coalition’s “Petition of Class Waiver” of Commission’s Rules for Access to Advanced Communications and Services for People with Disabilities. The E-reader Coalition—Amazon, Sony and Kobo— assert that their e-readers were manufactured for the sole purpose of reading text, therefore they should not be required to comply with FCC regulations that e-readers be accessible. The E-reader Coalition suggests that e-readers are a different class of product. ALA argues that the E-reader Coalition exemption would be discriminatory. Read the comments: <http://apps.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/view?id=7520941612>.

DCWG Publishes Article in Bowker Annual

DCWG Co-chairs Sari Feldman and Robert Wolven and Carrie Russell published “E-book Business Models for Public Libraries: A Response to Publisher-Library Differences” in the 2013 Library and Book Trade Almanac (formerly the Bowker Annual). The article summarizes much of ALA’s activities in 2012 and into early 2013.

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS (OGR)

ALA Joins Others to Demand Civil Liberties and Launches Privacy Toolkit

The American Library Association joined 86 other civil liberties groups, Internet activists and authors to sign an open letter to Congress, calling for a congressional investigation committee, similar to the Church Committee of the 1970s. The letter is in response to the recent leaking of highly classified documents about the government’s monitoring of private Internet and telephone communications. The letter calls on Congress to enact reform to Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act to make clear that blanket surveillance of the Internet activity and phone records of any person residing in the U.S. is prohibited by law. [Read the full letter](#). Key civil liberties organizations and major companies such as Apple, Facebook and Twitter, joined in the effort with dozens of other companies and organizations, both large and small. [WeNeedToKnow](#), the newly launched petition directed at the White House invites the public to contribute to the call for greater transparency around government surveillance.

More recently, ALA’s Office of Government Relations, working closely with the Office for Intellectual Freedom, has continued to monitor the almost two dozen new bills introduced in the Senate and the House each calling for types of reforms to our nation’s surveillance laws. Some of the bills seek more transparency and information about the activities of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court while others propose a spectrum of reforms to Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act. Coalition efforts continue with new statements and letters being developed.

In July, ALA launched “[ALA Liberty](#),” a new website that contains tools libraries can use to host educational sessions and public forums that help Americans understand their First and Fourth Amendment rights. The launch of [ALA Liberty](#) comes as a response to revelations that the U.S. government obtained vast amounts of big data on the activities of millions of innocent Americans. The website contains guides and tip sheets for libraries interested in informing members of the public about their civil liberties. The tools provide an overview of the deliberative process and outlines ways that the public can demand government oversight and transparency from legislators.

OGR Involved with New Project on Seniors and Technology

OGR cosponsored and participated in a pilot workshop with Senior Service America, Inc., Montgomery County Public Libraries, and the Benton Foundation, as well as officials from both the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and the Maryland Workforce Corporation. This is part of ALA’s efforts to assure that libraries are recognized and can get funding for workforce investment programs. The pilot workshop is intended to be replicated in a number of other states and support senior job hunters by offering digital literacy training through libraries and cooperative activities with various state and local

government employment services.

IMLS, ALA Detail Affordable Care Act Resources for Library Staff

The Institute of Museum and Library Services and ALA recently announced information resources for libraries to use to assist patrons about the Affordable Care Act. OCLC's WebJunction will provide online educational webinars, tip sheets, and other resources to help library staff members respond to increased patron information needs related to the new health insurance marketplace. Library staff can access materials, online resources, webinar registrations, and archived webinar recordings at <http://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/ehealth/get-involved.html>.

Owners Rights' Initiative

OGR continues to be an active member of the Owners Rights' Initiative (ORI). ORI is a coalition of businesses and organizations that formed to protect ownership rights and the first sale doctrine in response to the *Kirtsaeng v. Wiley* case. Even with Supreme Court *Kirtsaeng* victory, ORI continues to make Hill visits to ensure that first sale, which enables libraries to lend, is protected in any reform to the Copyright Act. The House Judiciary Committee is currently holding hearings on copyright reform in what is expected to be a multi-year effort. Watch the session: <http://www.districtdispatch.org/2013/09/make-difference-libraries-d-c-really-possible-video/>

OGR Hosts Advocacy Webinar

On Monday, September 16, 2013, the Office of Government Relations hosted a webinar titled, "Make a Difference for Libraries in DC (Really, it's Possible)." The session was led by OGR consultant Stephanie Vance and was attended by more than 200 people. The first portion of the webinar walked attendees through what to expect as Congress approaches difficult legislative battles surrounding the budget. The second portion gave viewers practical examples and tips on how to establish an advocacy strategy for the coming months. Like all other webinars, this session is archived on the Washington Office blog, the *District Dispatch*.

OGR Welcomes the New Public Printer of the United States

Jessica McGilvray was glad to represent the Office of Government Relations at the swearing in ceremony of Davita Vance-Cooks on August 21st. Vance-Cooks is the 27th Public Printer of the United States Government Printing Office (GPO) and the first woman to serve in this position. She was confirmed unanimously by the Senate on August 2nd and was proudly sworn in later that month. ALA looks forward to working with the GPO and the Public Printer in the coming years.