

**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:**  
Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director, ALA Washington Office  
202-628-8410, esheketoff@alawash.org

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**  
N/A

**DATE:**  
March 27, 2015

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

Attachments: Executive Board Report on Washington Office Activities

# ALA Washington Office Activities

## **Sen. Durbin, FCC Leaders Address ALA Midwinter Meeting**

The ALA Washington Office organized a number of a well-attended sessions at the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting. Assistant Senate Minority Leader Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) discussed the implications of the November mid-term Congressional elections for America, libraries and library advocacy during the Washington Update session. Roger Goldblatt, associate bureau chief of the Federal Communications Commission's Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau, spoke at the same conference session, focusing on the Commission's new consumer education initiative and its digital literacy agenda.

In another program, library leaders, including ALA Executive Board member Jim Neal, gathered to discuss a preliminary national policy agenda as part of the ALA *Policy Revolution!* and how it relates to ALA's overall strategy. In one conference session on ebooks, an expert panel provided insights on new opportunities available to libraries now that five of the world's largest publishers provide libraries with access to their full ebook catalogs. In another session, Maura Marx, acting IMLS director, detailed the agency's priorities for the next two years, which will shape the agency's discretionary and Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States programs.

# Office of Government Relations

## **Registration Opens for 41st Annual National Library Legislative Day**

In January, registration opened for the American Library Association's 41<sup>st</sup> annual National Library Legislative Day, a two-day advocacy event through which hundreds of library supporters, leaders and patrons from across the country meet with Members of Congress in Washington, D.C. This year's National Library Legislative Day takes place May 4–5. Participants will receive advocacy tips and training, along with important issue briefings prior to their meetings.

First-time, non-librarian participants are eligible for a unique scholarship opportunity. The White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce (WHCLIST) and the ALA Washington Office are calling for nominations for the 2015 WHCLIST Award. Recipients of this award receive a stipend (\$300 and two free nights at a D.C. hotel). The deadline for applications is April 1, 2015. For more information, visit [www.ala.org/nlld](http://www.ala.org/nlld).

OGR continues to coordinate “Leg Day” promotion with the Chapter Relations Office, United for Libraries, the Office of Library Advocacy and other appropriate ALA Offices, units and state association leaders.

## **ALA Issues Statement Opposing House Budget Proposal Potentially Eliminating IMLS**

Upon release of the House Budget Committee's Report on its latest “illustrative” Budget Resolution proposing to eliminate all funding for IMLS, and with it programs such as the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), OGR coordinated release of a public statement by President Courtney Young. The office also, upon request, assisted senior staff of the National Archives to identify and analyze the appropriate statutory language. Now that Republicans have gained majorities in the House and Senate, budget hawks will need to be monitored to protect funding for our nation's libraries. Budget and appropriations discussions may dominate much of Congress' agenda for the balance of the year.

## **ALA Works Intensively to Support Continued LSTA and IAL Funding**

With “appropriations season” in high gear, ALA again led efforts to secure broad, bipartisan support for letters by Members of Congress to their colleagues serving on the House and Senate Appropriations Committees specifically endorsing funding for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL). ALA's efforts succeeded in obtaining more House signatures on the two letters than in 2014, while nearly matching the number of signatures on the Senate letters despite the fact that many previous Senate supporters are no longer in office. All told, 31 Senators signed the LSTA letter and 25 signed the IAL letter. In the House, 68 representatives signed the LSTA letter while 125 signed the IAL letter.

ALA also delivered numerous grassroots alerts and notices to library advocates in an effort to support these letters, ultimately generating 6,160 emails from 2,131 individuals directed to more than 90 percent of all Members of Congress (487 of 533 total). Each message specifically asked Senators and Representatives to sign the two letters of support for LSTA and IAL that were

circulated. In addition, ALA generated nearly two dozen detailed “official” budget request forms required by Appropriations Committee members. Each request required state-specific data on LSTA and IAL programs with only a few days to gather the specific data and file the non-standardized forms with various offices.

ALA joined numerous coalition partners on two letters to Congress urging reasonable appropriations. The [first letter \(pdf\)](#) urges that sequestration cuts be replaced with a balanced approach to defense and non-defense discretionary spending. The [second letter \(pdf\)](#), which was sent to Senators Blunt and Murray and Representatives Cole and DeLauro, urges continued support or impact aid to federally owned school real estate.

### **ALA Actively Pushes for Congress to Include School Library/Librarian Language in ESEA**

In late January, U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) joined Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran (R-MS) in introducing the SKILLS Act (S.312). The bipartisan SKILLS Act would amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) by requiring state and school districts to develop “effective school library programs” to help students gain digital literacy skills, master the knowledge and skills in the challenging academic content standards adopted by the state, and graduate from high school ready for college and careers. By definition, an effective school library program would include an adequately resourced school library staffed by a state-certified librarian. ALA submitted formal comments to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander and Ranking Member Sen. Patty Murray on their Discussion Draft of legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. ALA asked librarians via legislative alerts to contact their Senators to ask that the SKILLS Act be integrated into the seminal version of the ESEA reauthorization bill written by Chairman Alexander and Sen. Murray, which would become the basis for the HELP Committee’s subsequent consideration of ESEA. If the SKILLS Act is included in such a “base bill,” it would send the signal that Committee leadership backs the proposal and would likely oppose any effort to strip it from the bill by later amendment.

In March, OGR conceived and orchestrated two intensive and distinct ad hoc coalition efforts to support dedicated school library funding in the reauthorization of ESEA. The first letter went to key Democratic Members of the Senate HELP Committee. ALA and AASL were joined on the first letter by eleven other leading national non-profit organizations, including the: NEA, AFT, National Superintendents Roundtable, National Alliance of Black School Educators and the National Literacy Council.

The [second letter \(pdf\)](#) was backed by more than 20 education businesses, associations and media groups, including: Scholastic Inc., EBSCO Information Services and the Association of American Publishers, Baker & Taylor, OverDrive, Booklist Publications, Bound to Stay Bound Books, DEMCO Inc. and the Junior Library Guild. Both letters call on the U.S. Congress to incorporate the SKILLS Act in ESEA reauthorization, which would expand federal investment in school libraries in order to offer students the tools they need to develop critical thinking, digital, and research skills. ALA transmitted the letters, targeted appropriately, to U.S. Senate HELP Committee Chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and HELP Committee Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA).

OGR continues to collaborate with other ALA units, including the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), OLA, the Chapter Relations Office (CRO) and PIO to assure that messaging is consistent and is reaching librarians and library advocates across the country. AASL is encouraging both AASL and affiliate members to contact Congress and mobilize their networks, and OLA and CRO are doing similar outreach with state chapters. Both traditional communications and social media plans have been developed collaboratively.

### **Senator Cornyn Receives Madison Award for Championing Public's Right to Know**

In March, ALA awarded Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) the 2015 James Madison Award during the 17th Annual Freedom of Information Day in Washington, D.C. While the Senator was unable to attend in person, he recorded a video that was shown thanking ALA and acknowledging its long commitment to open access to government and other information. The engraved crystal award was subsequently presented to the Senator himself at the Capitol by Washington Office Executive Director Emily Sheketoff.

The James Madison Award honors individuals who have championed, protected and promoted public access to government information and the public's right to know how it functions. Since taking office in 2002, Sen. Cornyn has led congressional efforts to improve the public's access to government information. In 2007, he co-sponsored the OPEN Government Act, which reformed the Freedom of Information Act and created the Office of Government Information Services (GIS). Earlier this year, Sen. Cornyn introduced the FOIA Improvement Act of 2015, which would strengthen the GIS and require that records be released unless there is foreseeable harm or a legal requirement to withhold them.

Sen. Cornyn also has been active in the fight to make federally-funded research accessible to the public. As a co-sponsor of both the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FACTA) and the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act of 2013 (FASTR), Sen. Cornyn has spearheaded efforts to give Americans open access to taxpayer-funded research and to achieve the social and economic progress for which such access is a necessity. Indeed, the Senator reintroduced the latest version of FASTR just hours before his award was announced at Washington's Newseum. Sen. Cornyn serves as the Senate's Majority Whip, the second highest ranking position in the Republican Leadership behind Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

### **ALA Submits Joint House Testimony Backing FOIA "Transparency" Reforms**

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's Subcommittee on Government Operations held a hearing entitled "Ensuring Government Transparency through FOIA Reform" on February 27, 2015. [ALA joined with nine other organizations to submit testimony](#) proposing an amendment to the [House FOIA Reform bill](#) that would allow all FOIA processors access to all electronic records systems for the processing of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. The Freedom of Information Act is a law that gives the public the right to access information held by the federal government.

### **ALA Organizes Access for Library Leaders to IRS Tax Form Program Officials**

In March, the ALA Washington Office hosted a conference call with several Internal Revenue Service (IRS) officials to discuss problems and issues surrounding the distribution of 2014 tax forms and instruction publications to libraries. Nearly 100 library leaders participated in the call. The IRS is calling for library leaders to comment on ways to improve the Tax Forms Outlet Program (TFOP). To provide feedback on the TFOP program, please email Emily Sheketoff at [esheketoff@alawash.org](mailto:esheketoff@alawash.org). They have also funded a committee to facilitate changes in the distribution for the future.

### **ALA Capitalizes on Extensive Coalition Opportunities to Underscore Library Priorities**

In this reporting period, OGR devoted extensive time and effort to reinforcing and amplifying its participation in multiple issue-driven coalitions addressing fundamental library principles and needs. These efforts were reflected in ALA's evaluation, fine-tuning and ultimate endorsement of more than a dozen joint letters to Congress and other arms of the federal government. Issues covered included: agency compliance with international human rights obligations, personal privacy challenges posed by "E911" cell phone locator technology, transparency in trade agreement negotiation and the importance of preserving fair use and other important "access" provisions of U.S. copyright law in them, as well as potential congressional action to reform FOIA, and cybersecurity, copyright, privacy and surveillance statutes.

### **President's Budget Proposes Increased Library Funding**

The nearly \$4 trillion budget transmitted to Congress by President Obama in early February would fund the federal government for the 2016 fiscal year, which begins October 1, 2015. Highlights for the library community include \$186.5 million in assistance to libraries through the Library Services and Technology Act, an important program that provides funding to states through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The budget includes \$8.8 million in new funding for library and museum services to give more Americans free and electronic access to the resources of libraries, archives, and museums by promoting the use of technology to expand access to their holdings. If funded by Congress, this creation of a National Digital Platform would be administered through the IMLS National Leadership Grant programs, taking \$5.3 million from LSTA and \$3.5 million from museum funds.

### **President Obama Nominates Kathryn Matthew to Lead IMLS**

In March, President Barack Obama announced his intent to nominate Dr. Kathryn Matthew to serve as the director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Dr. Matthew is currently the chief science educator at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, a position she has held since 2014. She was a principal consultant and a product manager at Blackbaud, Inc. from 2008 to 2013, a director at the Historic Charleston Foundation from 2006 to 2008, and an exhibits consultant at Chemical Heritage Foundation from 2005 to 2006.

# Office for Information Technology Policy

## OITP Releases 3D Printer Policy Report

In January, OITP released “Progress in the Making: 3D Printing Policy Considerations Through the Library Lens,” a new report that encourages libraries to take a proactive role in developing institutional policies that address the social, technological and political complexities that will result from the rise of 3D printing. In the report, OITP Information Policy Analyst Charlie Wapner outlines the role 3D printing now plays in libraries and formal centers for learning, and analyzes a number of policy issues, including copyright, trademark, trade dress and product liability, that may arise from 3D printing in public, school and academic libraries. The report also examines various intellectual freedom issues in a section drafted by Deborah Caldwell-Stone of OIF.

## Library Leaders: E-Rate Opportunities Take Center Stage

At the start of the Midwinter Meeting in Chicago, OITP announced the launch of [“Got E-rate?”](#) a new initiative that encourages library directors to apply for internet discounts as part of the national E-rate program. The initiative is a response to the FCC’s recent overhaul of the E-rate program, which included adding \$1.5 billion to the annual available funding. In the coming weeks, ALA, in collaboration with the Public Library Association (PLA), state library agencies, and other partners, will launch a series of E-rate resources, including communications, education, practical tools and technical support for librarians who are interested in applying for E-rate funding. More information is available at: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/goterate>.

## ALA Seeks Feedback on Draft National Policy Agenda for Libraries

In January, OITP released for discussion a [draft policy agenda \(pdf\)](#) for librarians to guide a proactive policy shift. The draft agenda flows out of library values and the imperative of “opportunity for all,” as well as within a context of national political, economic and demographic trends and opportunities. The draft agenda articulates three broad themes to organize the national public policy goals of the U.S. library community: Services, People, and Institutional Issues. Outlining this key set of issues and context is being pursued through the [Policy Revolution! Initiative](#), led by ALA OITP and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) with guidance from a Library Advisory Committee—which includes broad representation from across the library community and Jim Neal as the Executive Board’s liaison.

## ALA Applauds FCC Vote to Protect Open Internet

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted in February to assert the strongest possible open Internet protections—banning paid prioritization and the blocking and throttling of lawful content and services. ALA, a longtime network neutrality advocate, applauds this bold step forward in ensuring a fair and open Internet. During the past months, ALA has submitted formal comments, met with FCC officials, drafted articles, and worked alone and through a coalition of other library and higher education groups, including ARL and EDUCAUSE.

## **ALA Applauds Legislation for Increased Wi-Fi Spectrum**

In February, ALA applauded the reintroduction of the Wi-Fi Innovation Act (S.424) by Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Cory Booker (D-NJ), which would help ensure the nation's libraries and their communities have access to the spectrum needed to meet growing demands for wireless access. ALA advocates for increased wi-fi spectrum primarily as a member of the Wi-Fi Forward coalition, of which Larra Clark is a member.

## **ALA Joins Entrepreneurial Co-Working and Collaboration Panel at 2015 SXSW Interactive**

In March, OITP staff member Larra Clark organized and moderated a panel of library and startup experts at the 2015 South by Southwest (SXSW) Interactive conference to explore the trend of entrepreneurial spaces in libraries. Other panelists included Nicholas Kerelchuk, manager of the D.C. Public Library Digital Commons and Jonathan Marino, director of content and strategy for MapStory, an online social mapping platform that empowers people to map historical change over time. In addition, OITP Advisory Committee member Janice Tsai served on a panel on privacy technology. While in Austin, Larra gave presentations at the state library and with the Texas Library Association.

## **Call For Nominations: Robert L. Oakley Memorial Scholarship**

OITP is soliciting applications for the Robert L. Oakley Memorial Scholarship. Librarians interested in intellectual property, public policy and copyright have until June 1, 2015, to apply for the annual \$1,000 scholarship, which was developed by the American Library Association and the Library Copyright Alliance, and supports research and advanced study for librarians in their early-to-mid-careers.