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:
None.

DATE: June 10, 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

ALA Welcomes White House’s ConnectED: Library Challenge

On April 29th, the White House announced the launch of ConnectED: Library Challenge, a new initiative to ensure that all school students receive public library cards through their schools. The ALA Washington Office secured an opportunity for American Library Association President Courtney Young to meet with President Barack Obama immediately prior to the launch of the ConnectED: Library Challenge initiative. Young responded to the Challenge by calling on school and public library leaders to work collaboratively with school administrators and civic leaders to ensure that each and every student has a public library card. In the fall, the Institute of Museum and Library Services will convene a meeting of the national library, government and school leaders to discuss best practices for developing and implementing school-public library card programs in their local districts. ALA has and will continue to promote a key role for school librarians to ensure the success of this program over the coming months.

ALA Helps Found and Launch New Copyright Coalition Re:Create

In late April, ALA joined almost one dozen other founding member trade and civil society organizations to launch “Re:Create: Innovators, Creators and Consumers United for Balanced Copyright.” The group is a new coalition formed in anticipation of at least some, and potentially sweeping, efforts beginning in the current Congress to “reform” copyright law. Detailed information about Re:Create, its mission, objectives and positions on a broad range of issues is online at: www.recreatecoalition.org.

District Dispatch Subscriber Count Doubles

In the past six months, the ALA Washington Office has more than doubled the number of subscribers to the District Dispatch, the Office’s policy blog. Since ALA Washington Office Press Officer Jazzy Wright rolled out the technical and graphic redesign of the District Dispatch blog and ALA Grassroots Communications Specialist Lisa Lindle began her social media work, the Office’s policy blog has more than doubled from 3,000 to just under 6,100 subscribers.
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Senate HELP Committee Passes Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA), including school libraries

The Committee marked up a reauthorization for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including much of the school library improvements ALA requested, but not all. Letters promoting ALA’s position were sent to the Committee members from businesses, the school librarian’s unions and education associations.

The bill did include many opportunities for the school libraries and librarians to be specifically included, for instance, it authorizes states to use funds to support the instructional services provided by school librarians. And Local Education Agencies (LEA) are authorized to use funds to support the instructional services provided by school librarians.

For the purposes of Teaching of Traditional American History, LEAs are required to carry out grant activities in partnership with an institution of higher education; a nonprofit history or humanities organization; or a library or museum. For the purposes of Presidential and Congressional Academies for American History and Civics, an eligible entity is defined as an institution of higher education or nonprofit educational organization; museum; library; or research center with demonstrated expertise in historical methodology or the teaching of American history and civics; or a consortium of entities.

Eligible entities must use subgrant funds to coordinate the involvement of early childhood education program staff, principals, other instructional leaders, teachers, teacher literacy teams, English as a second language specialists (as appropriate), special educators, and school librarians in the literacy development of children up the Grade 5 who are served under the grant. And eligible entities must use subgrant funds to coordinate the involvement of principals, other instructional leaders, teachers, teacher literacy teams, English as a second language specialists (as appropriate), paraprofessionals, special educators, and school librarians in the literacy development of children in Grades 6 through 9 served under the grant. And finally, it authorizes as an allowable use of funds for children in Kindergarten through Grade 12, eligible entities can use funds to provide time for teachers (and other literacy staff, as appropriate, such as school librarians) to meet to plan comprehensive literacy instruction.

21st century community learning centers can use their local funds to support expanded library service hours. And it authorizes eligible entities to use funds to promote the effective use of materials developed under the program among parents, teachers, Head Start providers, providers of family literacy services, child care providers, early childhood development personnel, elementary school teachers, public libraries, and after-school program personnel caring for preschool and elementary school children.

Under the I-TECH Definitions, the term “technology readiness survey” means a survey completed by an LEA that provides standardized information on the quantity and types of technology infrastructure and access available to the students and in the community served by the LEA, including computer devices, access to school libraries, Internet connectivity, operating systems, related network infrastructure, data systems, educator professional learning needs and priorities, and data security. State Education Agencies (SEA) applications must include an assurance that each LEAs awarded a subgrant have conducted a “technology readiness survey” (which includes access to school libraries) and will take steps to address the readiness gaps identified not later than 3 years after the completion of the survey by the LEA.
SEAs must use state grant funds to provide technical assistance to LEAs to identify and address technology readiness needs, as determined by the technology readiness surveys (which includes access to school libraries); and ensure that teachers, paraprofessionals, library and media personnel, specialized instructional support personnel, and administrators possess the knowledge and skills to use technology. LEA applications must include a description of the results of the technology readiness survey (which includes access to school libraries) completed by the LEA; and a description of the team of educators who will coordinate and carry out the activities, including individuals with responsibility and expertise in instructional technology, teachers that specialize in supporting students who are children with disabilities and English learners, other school leaders, library and media personnel, technology officers, and staff responsible for assessments and data.

LEAs must use at least 50% of their funds to carry out professional development in digital learning for teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, library and media personnel, specialized instructional support personnel, technology coordinators, and administrators in the use of technology to support student learning. Each LEA must submit a report to the SEA and each SEA must submit a report to the Secretary of Education that must include the professional learning activities funded under the grant, including types of activities and entities involved in providing such professional learning to classroom teachers and other staff, such as school librarians.

And a section authorizes a new Literacy and Arts Education program that authorizes eligible entities to use funds to promote literacy programs that support the development of literacy skills in low-income communities, including developing and enhancing effective school library programs, which may include providing professional development for school librarians, books, and up-to-date materials to low-income schools.

**ALA Works to Support Federal Library Funding**

ALA led efforts this spring to secure broad, bipartisan congressional support for federal appropriations letters endorsing funding for the Library Services and Technology Act and Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL). Thirty-one Senators signed the LSTA “Dear Appropriators” 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 legislators).

**ALA Testifies In Support Of Library Funding At U.S. House LHHS Hearing**

On April 28th, Emily Sheketoff, executive director of the ALA Washington Office, called on the U.S. House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies to support federal library funding at an appropriations hearing that took place in Washington, D.C. Sheketoff advocated for the House Subcommittee to include $186.6 million for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) under the Institute of Museum and Library Services and $25 million for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program under the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
Hundreds from Every State Converge on D.C. for 41st Annual National Library Legislative Day

In May, more than 400 library advocates met in Washington, D.C. to speak with their legislators about the importance of libraries as part of the 41st annual National Library Legislative Day. Former Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) jumpstarted the opening briefing by speaking about the importance of constituent advocacy. Additional speakers include American Library Association President Courtney Young, Patrice McDermott, director of Openthegovernment.org and several congressional staff experts. During the annual event Mas’ood Cajee, a library advocate from Stockton, California, was awarded the 2015 White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIST) Award.

Media Interest in ALA’s USA Freedom Activities

In Long Lines for Freedom, an op-ed published in Washington’s popular “CongressBlog” in The Hill on National Library Legislative Day, President Young recounted librarians’ long history of opposition to the bulk surveillance of Americans’ phone and library records and called strongly on Congress to pass the new USA FREEDOM Act to finally end those practices.

Additionally, the cover story of the The Nation magazine’s May 25th issue (available online) chronicles the library community’s past and present advocacy and lobbying efforts to protect the public from intrusive government surveillance in a feature-length article titled Librarians Versus the NSA. The piece includes quotations from ALA Washington Office Executive Director Emily Sheketoff, OGR Managing Director Adam Eisgrau, OIF Director Barbara Jones and Alison Macrina of the Library Freedom Project. The issue’s cover is boldly titled “Not Your Grandmother’s Librarian: Fighting Big Brother in the Digital Age” and features a full-page illustration of a serious, book tattoo-sporting librarian in an updated take on the iconic “Rosie the Riveter” image.

Direct ALA Lobbying, Grassroots Advocacy and Coalition Efforts Help Push Congress to Pass Landmark Reforms of “Library” and Other Provisions of PATRIOT Act

Less than a mere five weeks after its introduction in the House, but after years of foundational effort, the USA FREEDOM Act was signed into law by President Obama on June 2nd. The bill, the first major reform of the nation’s surveillance laws since 2001, finally ends the NSA’s use of Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act (the “library provision”) to collect telephone call and other “business records” (like library patron data) in bulk. Among other reforms, it also for the first time enables meaningful challenge and judicial review of the “gag orders” often accompanying National Security Letters like the ones challenged by the “Connecticut Four.” ALA grassroots and other lobbying played a significant and congressionally acknowledged role in this historic result. Librarians were especially active in the critical final hours preceding the Senate’s votes producing over 2,200 emails to Congress in less than eight hours in response to a “last push” alert sent by the Washington Office. The bill’s reforms become effective in early December.
Library Copyright Alliance Applauds Introduction of the Breaking Down Barriers to Innovation Act

In April, the Library Copyright Alliance applauded the introduction of the Breaking Down Barriers to Innovation Act of 2015 in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. The bill would address serious problems with the rulemaking process under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. It also would correct deficiencies in several of the existing exceptions to the DMCA. Under current law, the DMCA could be understood to prohibit the circumvention of technological protection measures or “digital locks” for non-infringing purposes, including the fair use of copyrighted material otherwise permitted by law.

ALA will submit Comments to the Departments of Labor and Education’s Rulemaking for Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The Washington Office created a Task Force of state library agency staff and public librarians with experience in delivering workforce services to assist in ALA’s comments to the WIOA Rulemaking. The comments communicate library’s intentions to participate in WIOA as eligible training partners, non-mandatory one-stop partners, models of digital technology enhancement implementation, local or consortium-based Adult Education and Family Literacy Act service providers and leadership-training grant recipients.
OFFICE FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POLICY

“Digital Futures” Supplement to American Libraries Released

The fifth supplement to American Libraries on digital content was issued in late May with the theme that libraries are taking the initiative in advocacy for improved library access. This report “Digital Futures” features ten articles that include national experts and leaders such as Maura Marx, James Neal, Sari Feldman, Carolyn Anthony, Micah May, Eric Hellman, and Vailey Oehlke, with OITP director Alan S. Inouye serving as guest editor. While we acknowledge the progress made in digital content matters, much disruption is on the horizon and therefore much more work for ALA remains.

Engaged with and Supporting the Florida and Texas Chapters

Larra Clark and Charlie Wapner presented at the Florida Library Association Annual Conference in two sessions. Maker spaces and 3D printers were the focus of one session and information policy and the Policy Revolution! initiative were featured in the second session. Also during this period, Carrie Russell presented at the Texas Library Association Annual Conference and presented the L. Ray Patterson Copyright Award to Georgia Harper, recently retired from the University of Texas.

Library Broadband Speed Test Shows Increased Capacity; Room Still for Improvement

Broadband speeds in U.S. public libraries have improved significantly in recent years yet continues to lag behind national broadband connectivity standards, according to “Broadband Quality in Public Libraries,” a new report released jointly in April by the American Library Association and the Information Policy & Access Center at the University of Maryland College Park as part of the Digital Inclusion Survey of which OITP is a partner. Libraries reported progress in their public Internet speeds—nearly half of all libraries report subscribed Internet download speeds as being greater than 10 Mbps in 2013, compared with only 18 percent of libraries four years earlier.

ALA, DCWG Make Strong Showing at Book Expo America

Four representatives of ALA participated in two panel sessions and a series of publisher meetings at the 2015 Book Expo America in New York. Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels moderated one panel on library-publisher partnerships while DCWG co-chair Carolyn Anthony served on another focused on discovery. Keith and Carolyn were joined by Alan S. Inouye and Carrie Russell of OITP in meetings with Penguin Random House and a number of mid-sized publishers and industry experts.

Strong Coalition Calls on Libraries to Plan Now to Secure E-Rate Funding

Now that the 2015 E-rate application window is closed, several library organizations are encouraging libraries to revisit their plans for 2016 and beyond with the new opportunities in mind. In April, a broad coalition of library associations, including ALA, released a letter updating library leaders on the next phase of E-rate advocacy. Library coalition members include the American Indian Library Association; the American Library Association; the Association for Rural & Small Libraries; the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums; the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies; the Public Library Association; and the Urban Libraries Council. A planning session is scheduled for Friday at the Annual Conference.
Commendations on E-rate

ALA President Courtney Young, ALA E-rate Task Force Chair Kathi Peiffer, and OITP Associate Director Marijke Visser presented Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler with the ALA Council resolution thanking him and the Commission for its efforts on behalf of libraries. The Council “Resolved, that the American Library Association, on behalf of its members: 1) extends its deepest appreciation to Chairman Wheeler for his vision for connecting America’s libraries and schools to high-capacity broadband to best serve our communities nationwide; and 2) recognizes with gratitude Chairman Wheeler and the Commission for their unflagging work throughout the 18-month E-rate Modernization proceeding.” During this period, Marijke Visser also received ALA’s Staff Achievement Award for her work on E-rate.

Simon & Schuster Provides 5,000 Ebooks to Libraries During National Library Week

Working with ALA, Simon & Schuster announced the distribution of 5,000 ebook copies of the Academy Award–winning producer Brian Grazer’s new book, “A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life” to libraries. In addition to the ebook distribution during National Library Week, Simon & Schuster cooperated with ALA to promote the program and the important role of libraries. Jonathan Karp, President and Publisher of Simon & Schuster, said, “Libraries make knowledge accessible to everyone. We could not think of any better way to honor National Library Week than by sharing a book that celebrates the quest for knowledge with libraries across the country and around the world.”

OITP Engages in Multiple Library Community Convenings

In addition to the activities described above, OITP representatives participated in an array of other activities:

- Alan S. Inouye participated in an IMLS convening on the national digital platform held in Washington, D.C.
- Carrie Russell participated in multiple meetings related to ebooks at DPLA Fest in Indianapolis, Indiana
- Larra Clark and Alan S. Inouye, with Emily Sheketoff, hosted more than a dozen information policy students from the University of Maryland for an evening of discussions on policy and lobbying at the ALA Washington Office
- Larra Clark participated in an Advisory Committee meeting on the future of the MLS for the College of Information Studies at the University of Maryland
- Alan S. Inouye participated in a public policy summit at the headquarters of Google in Mountain View, California
- Larra Clark participated in a multi-day convening of international library leaders at the Gates Foundation
- Larra Clark and Alan S. Inouye participated in the Coalition for Networked Information Task Force meeting in Seattle.

Op-ed Published in The Hill

On May 28, Alan S. Inouye published an op-ed in The Hill titled “We Need a Digital Constitutional Convention.” This piece brings together a number of strands, such as the Re:Create copyright coalition, the Policy Revolution! initiative, and the NetGain initiative, as well as broad thinking about our work on copyright, net neutrality, privacy, and other areas. We anticipated further work in this vein of the integration of information policy efforts and libraries as the voice of reason in the debate.