EBD #12.37
2014-2015

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Communication with President Obama regarding the Librarian of Congress

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
N/A

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
N/A

CONTACT PERSON:
ALA President Courtney L. Young

DRAFT OF MOTION:
N/A

DATE: June 20, 2015

ATTACHMENTS: Letter

June 20, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Library of Congress is facing an historic opportunity to lead our knowledge society into a productive twenty-first century. The institution is widely regarded as our national library and must lead the nation and the world in the evolving information economy and in preserving the cultural record of the United States.

The American Library Association believes that the position of Librarian of Congress is critically important as a leader for our nation's libraries and cultural institutions and as a global role model for democratic principles, economic development and new education models. As you contemplate the leadership needed to accomplish the significant work that lies ahead for libraries in a rapidly changing information environment, we strongly urge you to appoint a professional librarian as the next Librarian of Congress.

Diversity and inclusion are foundational values of the library profession and essential elements in the provision of library resources, services, and staffing. We therefore urge that in making this appointment, strong consideration be given to a nominee who is a library leader reflective of the diversity of this nation.

We believe that the competencies of the Librarian of Congress need to include:

- experience as the leader of a major library serving the public and/or research community;
- deep subject/technical expertise in librarianship and the management of digital assets;
- an understanding of scholarly research and scholarly communication;
- executive management and leadership skills;
- communication, marketing and resource development skills; and
- vision, entrepreneurial spirit and a commitment to collaboration.

The Librarian of Congress will be the spokesperson and a partner in the global library community, understanding the integral role libraries of all types play in formal education, community-based learning, and the promotion of individual opportunity and community progress.

The American Library Association represents the library profession in promoting lifelong learning and the principle that all Americans should have access to the information they need to succeed and lead productive lives, especially in the digital age. The next Librarian of Congress must be a strong advocate for those information services, and a champion for equitable access and digital inclusion. With the globalization of information, the United States must lead the world by example and demonstrate that access to information is essential to all residents of each nation. For example, the Librarian of Congress must ensure that a comprehensive plan for the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NSL) is included in the new direction and digital strategy of the Library of Congress.

An informed citizenry is essential to our future as a thriving democratic society. Strong library and information services, led by the Librarian of Congress' visionary leadership, are essential to creating and maintaining that informed citizenry.

Because this is such a critical time for our society, our nation's libraries, and the Library of Congress, we would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss this appointment further, and stand ready to help in any way.

Sincerely,
Courtney L. Young
President, American Library Association