

**TO:** ALA Executive Board

**RE:** Status of Advocacy Initiatives

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**  
Information only

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**  
Cathleen Bourdon, AED, Communications and Member Relations  
Marcy Merola, Director, Office for Library Advocacy

**CONTACT PERSON:**  
Marcy Merola, Director, Office for Library Advocacy  
312-280-2431, [mmerola@ala.org](mailto:mmerola@ala.org)

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**  
N/A

**DATE:** 06-19-09

**SUMMARY:**

A focus on Annual Conference, the Advocacy Institute; Jim Rettig's Library Ecosystem panel discussion, the Building Coalitions web resource to launch at conference; Camila Alire's initiative; as well as updates on [ilovelibraries.org](http://ilovelibraries.org); the Safeway Partnership and the White House's United We Serve initiative. The library funding report is presented on behalf of PIO.

**Plans for 2009 Annual Conference**

OLA will offer a half-day program on ways for libraries to cope in a tough economy. "Surviving in a Tough Economy: An Advocacy Institute Workshop" will take place on Friday, July 10, 2009 from 2:00-5:00 p.m. at the Harold Washington Library, Lower Level.

With only a \$25 early bird/\$50 regular registration cost, this budget-minded program will feature a series of breakout sessions on topics such as Maintaining Your Budget, Working with Decision-Makers, Tips for a Successful Campaign in a Tough Economy, and Positive Messaging in a Tough Economy. The Advocacy Training Subcommittee of the Committee on Library Advocacy coordinated this meeting.

Presenters include: Carol Brey-Casiano, Chair, ALA Committee on Library Advocacy; Judith Gibbons, Chair, ALA Advocacy Training Subcommittee; Susan Schmidt, Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, Maryland; Jeff Smith, Trustee, Baltimore County Public Library; Shirley Bruursema, Trustee, Kent (MI) District Library; Larry Corbus, Corbus Library Consultants; Keith Michael Fiels, Executive Director, ALA and Marcy Merola, Director, ALA-OLA.

On Saturday, July 11, 2009, from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m., Jim Rettig's Advocacy Task Force will conduct a panel discussion on the topic of building statewide "Coalitions for All Libraries in a Tough Economy". Panelists include Donna Bero, Friends of the San Francisco Public Library; Gerri Fegan, President of the Massachusetts School Library Association; Pat Harris, Councilman and Trustee, St. Paul, Minn.; Carole Kupelian, President of the School Library Media Section of NYLA; and Anne Masters, Director of the Pioneer Library System in Oklahoma. Jan Sanders, Director of Libraries and Information Services for the City of Pasadena, Calif.; will moderate the panel discussion.

### **The Library Ecosystem: Building Coalitions Web Resource to Launch at Annual**

The Office for Library Advocacy (OLA), is working with Library Strategies, a consultancy of the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library, to create a web resources focusing on Building Statewide Coalitions, which will emphasize the need for different facets of the library community to work together in order to be stronger advocates. This is part of Jim Rettig's Library Ecosystem initiative. The resource will be part of Advocacy University: [www.ala.org/advocacyuniversity](http://www.ala.org/advocacyuniversity) .

### **Camila Alire's Presidential Initiative**

Marci Merola is serving as a staff liaison to 2009-2010 ALA President Camila Alire for her advocacy and literacy initiative. A toolkit on "Frontline Advocacy" will be produced through the Office for Library Advocacy.

### **Ilovelibraries.org**

A redesign of Ilovelibraries.org launched ahead of schedule in May, 2009. Benefits include an updated look as well as improved functionality. The website is currently generating 19,000 hits daily or almost 600,000 monthly.

### **ALA & Safeway Corp. Partnership**

OLA is leading an in-kind ALA partnership with the Safeway Corporation to bring public awareness and advocacy messages about libraries to consumers through a new cereal box campaign. Originally scheduled for June, the project launch has been moved to August or September of this year, due to a slight delay in production.

Packaging of Safeway's "family cereal line" will feature five different back panels about libraries. They will be distributed nationally to approximately 1,500 Safeway-owned stores around the country, which include Dominick's, Genuardi's and Safeway Stores.

The panels will focus around themes such as genealogy, lifelong learning, discover the world, get rich (promoting the value of the library), and great mysteries of the library.

OLA has been working with PIO, ORS and the ALA Development Office on this project, and many ALA units contributed content and ideas. Special thanks to Nann Blaine Hilyard for bringing a previous Safeway and libraries collaboration to OLA's attention.

### **White House Initiative: United We Serve**

Along with a range of units, OLA is taking an active role in the communications effort around the White House's volunteer initiative, United We Serve.

### **Library Funding**

#### **Ongoing: Pennsylvania Senate Bill 850**

Overview of impact from statement issued June 2, 2009 by M. Clare Zanes, Deputy Secretary of Libraries, Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Pennsylvania Department of Education:

“Despite the extremely difficult economic situation, the budget that Governor Rendell proposed in February reduced the library subsidy by just 1.5% in recognition that **Pennsylvanians need their libraries more than ever**. In contrast, the budget proposed under Senate Bill 850 **cuts the state library subsidy in half – a move that would lead to drastic cuts in services, resources, library staffing and** reduces the subsidy's buying power to 1995-1996 levels. A 50% cut on the state subsidy will have the devastating impact of reducing local library operating budgets by 10% to 40%.

In addition, Senate Bill 850:

- Eliminates the POWER (Pennsylvania Online World of Electronic Resources) Library
- Eliminates Reciprocal Borrowing (Statewide Library Card Program)
- Eliminates the agency's support for Interlibrary Delivery Service
- Eliminates virtual reference (Ask Here PA)
- Eliminates construction funds by eliminating the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation grants to libraries

SB850 will further impact libraries as the reduction in state funds will cause Pennsylvania to lose \$3.8 million in federal LSTA funds. This reduction represents 63% of the federal funds that support children's programming, the grant program, program innovation and the development of school, public and academic libraries. “

#### **SB 850 Media coverage:**

**Daily Kos** – May 28, 2009

[http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2009/5/28/736355/-PA-Senate-passes-50-cut-in-library-funding-\(UPDATED-wbill-info\)](http://www.dailykos.com/storyonly/2009/5/28/736355/-PA-Senate-passes-50-cut-in-library-funding-(UPDATED-wbill-info))

**The Sentinel** (Cumberland County) – June 3, 2009

<http://www.cumberlink.com/articles/2009/06/04/news/local/doc4a267ecc95f90552462559.txt>

**Republican-Herald** (Pottsville, PA) – May 28, 2009

[http://www.republicanherald.com/articles/2009/05/21/news/local\\_news/pr\\_republican.20090521.a.pg3.pr21library\\_s1.2535910\\_loc.txt](http://www.republicanherald.com/articles/2009/05/21/news/local_news/pr_republican.20090521.a.pg3.pr21library_s1.2535910_loc.txt)

### **Ongoing: New York City budget**

In his proposed budget, New York mayor Michael Bloomberg has proposed a 22.2% funding cut for the New York Public Library, the Queens Library, and the Brooklyn Public Library. The cuts call for 943 layoffs, the slashing of collection budgets, and ending weekend service in branch libraries. – *From Library Journal, May 6, 2009*

Additional coverage:

**The New York Times – June 16, 2009 – “A City Budget Short on Distress”**

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/17/opinion/17wed4.html>

**The Brooklyn Eagle – June 17, 2009 – “Brooklyn Library’s Funds Restored”**

[http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category\\_id=31&id=28909](http://www.brooklyneagle.com/categories/category.php?category_id=31&id=28909)

**Huffington Post – May 8, 2009 – “Libraries are America’s Lifelines – Leave them Alone”**

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kenneth-c-davis/libraries-are-americas-li\\_b\\_199879.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kenneth-c-davis/libraries-are-americas-li_b_199879.html)

### **Other funding stories:**

**Springfield, Illinois** – June 12, 2009 – Seeking to compensate for a \$7-9 million projected budget shortfall, the city of Springfield is considering drastic spending cuts. In addition to eliminating jobs in the fire and police departments, the Lincoln library and its two branches may be closed altogether. This latest crisis comes only three months into the fiscal year and follows a previous series of service cuts in Springfield’s library system, including elimination of hours. – *From the State Journal-Register*

**Toledo, Ohio** – May 18, 2009 – Due to a provision in Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland’s proposed budget allowing money to be taken out of the state public library fund, which affects all 250 of Ohio’s public libraries, the Toledo Lucas County Public Library stands to lose more than \$200,000. The loss of state funds comes in addition to a recent 10% budget cut, would mean a cut in services and collection development, according to Rhonda Sewell with the Toledo Lucas County Public Library. – *From WTOL-TV.*

**Woodbine, Georgia** – May 19, 2009 – Following a series of county-wide budget cuts, Camden County Commissioners have stated a need to trim an additional \$100,000 to balance the budget. Under consideration is the elimination of three paid positions at the Bryan-Lang Historical

Library, and running the facility on an appointment-only basis with volunteers, saving about \$80,000. In addition, the commissioners are considering cutting \$25,000 from the Camden County Library in Kingsland that was slated for the purchase of new books. – *From the Florida Times-Union*

**Greensboro, North Carolina** – May 11, 2009 – Despite record use, The Greensboro Public Library has cut \$353,000 so far in its budget, as part of a wider initiative to address the city’s budget shortfall, by suspending bookmobile services and leaving job openings unfilled. Despite these large cuts, the county wishes the library to cut an additional \$400,000, and the State of North Carolina is expected to decrease funding also. – *From MyFox8.com*

**St. Paul, Minnesota** – March 10, 2009 - More than 100 people came to the Hamline Branch of the St. Paul Public Library to listen to Mayor Chris Coleman and library director Melanie Huggins talk about the city's budget woes and the proposed closure of the facility, as well as to voice their concerns to Coleman and Huggins over the potential loss of a vital community institution.

Coleman and Huggins said that while they didn’t wish to close the library, tough decisions would have to be made in order to trim \$2.1 million from the library system's budget in the face of a projected \$44 million citywide budget shortfall. They suggested, however, that it could be possible to keep the building open for the rest of the year, with the goal of getting a community process going that would result in finding partners to enhance services at the building. – *From the Minneapolis Star*