

EBD #12.8
2019-2020

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Public Policy and Advocacy Office Report

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

No action requested

CONTACT PERSON:

Kathi Kromer, Associate Executive Director
(202) 628-8410
kkromer@alawash.org

DATE: October 4, 2019

BACKGROUND:

Report of activities of ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office

ATTACHMENTS:

Public Policy and Advocacy Report

ALA PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY REPORT

OFFICE NEWS

ALA Announces the Dates for National Library Legislative Day 2020

In September, [ALA announced](#) that the 45th annual National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) will be held on May 4-5, 2020, at the Georgetown Conference Center in Washington, DC. NLLD is a two-day educational event designed to provide attendees the opportunity to learn from policy experts and raise awareness among federal legislators about how and why libraries are vital to communities across America. To accommodate the growing number of NLLD attendees, the new NLLD venue at the Georgetown University Conference Center provides allotted breakout spaces for state delegation meetings and a more affordable room rate. Registration for NLLD will open later this fall. PPA is also preparing for the second annual ALA Congressional Fly-In event to be held at the onset of the congressional appropriations cycle in 2020.

ALA holds workshop on contract override

ALA hosted a contract override workshop in Washington September 19-20. With the leadership of Jim Neal, 24 participants investigated the challenges that licenses in the digital age pose for libraries of all types. The expert invitees included library practitioners from across the country as well as representatives from the Association of College & Research Libraries, American Association of Law Libraries, Association of Research Libraries, International Federation of Library Associations and the R Street Institute. Based on these discussions, a detailed articulation of the challenges and opportunities posed by licenses will be developed along with a policy agenda and plans.

PPA welcomes AASL leaders to Washington

The Public Policy and Advocacy Unit hosted a strategic planning and brainstorming session on September 6 for American Association of School Libraries leadership, PPA staff and other library stakeholders to explore how to advance school library priorities in Washington. ALA's education consultants from the Penn Hill Group also participated in the event.

PPA hosts UFL leaders

United For Libraries (UFL) President Peter Pearson and Immediate Past President Skip Dye, along with UFL staff, met with PPA staff on September to discuss ways to collaborate on advocacy efforts at the local, state and federal levels.

ADVOCACY OUTREACH

ALA units collaborate on #eBooksForAll communications campaign

In the wake of Macmillan Publishers' announcement that it was changing its licensing terms for libraries to limit them to only one eBook copy for the first two months of a new release, PPA has been coordinating the ALA response, starting with a [statement](#) from ALA President Wanda Brown. An [action page](#) was created, and the Public Library Association (PLA) has [amplified](#) this work and added its own [statement](#) from PLA President Ramiro Salazar. Together with the

Communications and Marketing Office, the three units coordinated a short-term communications plan to engage the public via an online petition and rapidly scale up activity before the embargo is scheduled to go into effect on November 1.

In early September ALA's Communications team worked closely with Nashville Public Library to stage a press conference to announce the eBooksForAll petition on September 11 during the 2019 Digital Book World conference held in Nashville. The local NPR affiliate and the Nashville bureau of the Associated Press sent reporters to cover the event. The AP story was published in numerous media outlets across the country, including the Washington Post and New York Times. In addition to the Nashville Public Library press conference, the Digital Book World conference featured an interview with ALA Executive Director Mary Ghikas, who discussed trends and challenges in developing digital lending.

State library associations and local public libraries continue to issue their own statements and conduct mini-campaigns as well, including executive op-eds in local news outlets, emails to patrons, and more. On ebooksforall.org, ALA has developed templates and featured examples of advocacy tactics from several library leaders across the country.

ALA collaborates with New Hampshire libraries ahead of 2020 presidential primary

In August, Senior Director Alan Inouye and Asst. Director of Public Policy & Strategic Initiatives Megan Ortegon traveled to New Hampshire to present the presidential primary initiative proposal to the New Hampshire Library Association (NHLA) Board. PPA staff presented and received approval the use of NHLA's logo -for co-branding purposes- for a series of policy position drafts for presidential candidates, their staff and the media. The policy briefs will focus on highlighting both New Hampshire and the nation's libraries and their role in addressing broadband needs, serving and honoring veterans and how an investment in libraries is an investment in our nation's future. The group also discussed avenues for the distribution for materials as well as explored other items to accompany the policy briefs to include honorary New Hampshire library cards and 3D-printed materials made exclusively in New Hampshire Libraries. Separately, PPA staff conducted several site visits to Goffstown Public Library, Whipple Free Library, Manchester City Library and Hopkinton Public Library. Currently, the working group - which includes, State Librarian Michael York, New Hampshire Library Trustee Association Past President David Hallenbeck and Assistant State Librarian Lori Fisher, who is an ALA Chapter Councilor for New Hampshire and a member of the ALA Policy Corps - is exploring possibilities for a candidate event with a focus on libraries.

ALA, PLA initiative continues to award micro-funding to local libraries across America

The [Libraries Lead with Digital Skills](#) initiative has awarded \$1000 grants to over 100 libraries in 19 states: PA, CT, OH, MD, VA, NM, IA, DE, VA, NH, RI, MI, MO, AZ, NV, AR, KY, ID, and WV. These libraries are holding workshops for job seekers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs using PLA and Grow with Google resources as well as their own. Projects range from digital skills trainings for beginners to creating resumes and practicing interview techniques, to holding job fairs with local areas business. The Laurel (DE) Public Library, for example, hosted a program focused on creating resumes and building a job search where participants had access to interview-ready clothing. They also partnered with local barbers and hairdressers to help participants present their best selves at the interviews. Other libraries will be

building partnerships with job centers or economic development councils such as the Carson City (NV) Library which will collaborate with JOIN Inc., a local workforce development organization to target job seekers to prepare application materials and hone their job seeking skills.

ALA receives \$2 million from Google.org to expand small businesses and entrepreneurship programming in libraries

ALA received a \$2 million grant from Google.org to develop library entrepreneurship centers and enable libraries across the country to double down on their support for people looking to start a new business. Beginning in 2020, ALA will fund 10 public libraries up to \$130 thousand each to establish new or extend existing partnerships with community-based organizations and further develop innovative models to bring the library's resources out into the community. Participating libraries will commit to focusing on outreach to low-income and underrepresented groups and develop models for inclusive programming. The grant will also support ALA in designing a "playbook" accessible to all libraries on what makes a successful library entrepreneurship program and in building a peer-learning network for librarians interested in developing entrepreneurship programs of their own.

ALA connects FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks with Boston Public Library

During a visit facilitated by ALA staff, FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks, spent the afternoon of September 16 learning about how Boston Public Library supports job seekers through the [Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Center](#) and its innovative programs addressing the digital divide, [Tech Goes Home](#). Staff shared a story about one patron who enrolled in Tech Goes Home: formerly incarcerated for 27 years, a patron came to the library looking for help catching up on technology. With the help of BPL instructors, he was able to obtain a computer at no-cost and is now enrolled at a local college under a veteran's program to learn basic computer coding. The Commissioner also learned about a WiFi hotspot lending program through which patrons can check out a hotspot to gain internet access at home.

ALA sponsors education coalition gala

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF) is the largest broad-based education coalition in Washington, D.C. As a longtime active member, ALA was a sponsor at CEF's 50th anniversary gala. The gala celebrated House Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-CA), Senior Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS) and National Teacher of the Year Rodney Robinson.

ALA expands outreach to state and local decisionmakers

Along with CRO, PLA, AASL and ALA's Chapter Relations Office, PPA launched an initiative to reach state and local decisionmakers through participation at non-library conferences. In partnership with the Tennessee Library Association, Tennessee State Library, and Nashville Public Library, staff will exhibit at the International City and County Managers Association Conference in Nashville in late October.

Also in partnership with CRO, PPA introduced a new season of Chapter Advocacy Exchanges, a webinar series for library leaders to hear best practices and engage in discussion. This season's inaugural webinar in early October, "Planning Your State's Legislative Strategy," featured

Lucinda Nord of Indiana Library Federation and Wendy Woodland of Texas Library Association.

PPA staff present on library policy priorities, issues in local and national events

- Director of Public Policy and Advocacy Carrie Russell led a group of twenty librarians to plan a national advocacy campaign calling for a return to public policy in balanced copyright law at the [Miami University Copyright Conference](#).
- Russell also represented ALA at a workshop on copyright education at Columbia University to explore a central clearinghouse for copyright education. Attendees included IMLS staff, museum professionals, adult education specialists, and scholarly communication and copyright librarians.
- Senior Policy Advocate Marijke Visser, presented [Integrating Computational Thinking into Technology Courses for School and Youth Services Librarians](#) at the IFLA conference (August 28) with Dr Jennifer Moore, Texas Woman's University; Dr. Joe Sanchez, Queen's College, City University of New York; and Nicky Rigg, Google.
- Deputy Director of PLA and PPA Larra Clark presented at the Council of State Governments-Eastern Regional Conference on July 30.
- Clark also presented at the [Association of Rural and Small Libraries conference](#) on (September 5-6), where she was joined by ALA Census task force member Karen Mellor. Census Bureau Director Dr. Steven Dillingham was present to recognize libraries for their contributions in supporting a complete census count.
- Alan Inouye joined Mary Ghikas and other ALA leaders at the 2020 Digital Book World conference in Nashville, where Ghikas discussed trends and challenges in developing digital lending during a feature interview with conference director Bradley Metrock on September 12.
- Deputy Director Public Policy and Government Relations Gavin Baker presented for United for Libraries webinar on September 11.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY UPDATES

ALA monitors lingering appropriations decisions in Congress

Congress continues work on FY 2020 funding bills; however, it is unlikely that they will finalize them before November. To keep the government open, Congress approved a short-term Continuing Resolution which funds the government through mid-November.

As it currently stands, the House Appropriations Committee bill provides a \$17 million increase for LSTA (raising LSTA from \$189.3 to \$206.3 million) and an additional \$2 million for Innovative Approaches to Literacy (raising IAL to \$29 million), while the draft Senate bill recommends a \$1 million increase for LSTA (\$190.3 million) and frozen funding for IAL.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

ALA participates in Senate Judiciary IP Subcommittee Copyright Office modernization roundtable

ALA requested and received an invitation to participate in new roundtable discussions regarding U.S. Copyright Office (CO) Modernization, one of only three organizations representing the public interest. Subcommittee Chairman Tillis (R-NC) and Ranking Member Coons (D-DE)

have taken a keen interest in the Copyright Office's ability to advance its digital infrastructure improvements as a unit within the Library of Congress. The Senators have new questions about the authority of the Register in managing IT. As Copyright Office modernization is progressing well (as documented in public testimony, LC and CO reports, and appropriations requests), ALA is concerned about the motivation behind the discussions and will monitor closely in the coming months.

CopyTalk webinars feature policy experts

PPA's monthly [CopyTalk webinars](#) continue to draw library copyright followers. The August CopyTalk showcased Will Cross (North Carolina State University), Dave Hansen (Duke University) and the [Library Copyright Institute](#), an IMLS-funded program designed to help further develop copyright expertise among librarians. One of the goals of the Library Copyright Institute is to develop a replicable, sustainable model of education that could work at small and large academic institutions. The September CopyTalk featuring ALA copyright counsel Jonathan Band focused on the [Copyright Alternative in Small-Claims Enforcement](#) (CASE) Act of 2019 (S. 1273) and on attention in the Senate to Copyright Office Modernization. The CopyTalk webinar series is sponsored by ALA's Copyright, Legislation, Advocacy, and Education (CLEAN) committee.

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

ALA expands civic education partnerships

The Public Policy & Advocacy office lead ALA's work on two new partnerships to provide civic education resources for libraries. [ALA joined as a Premier Partner of National Voter Registration Day](#), an unofficial holiday celebrated on the fourth Tuesday of September. ALA encouraged libraries to sign up to observe National Voter Registration Day on September 24, 2019. Participating libraries received a toolkit of free promotional materials such as posters and stickers, and opportunities for training. Approximately 1,000 libraries participated in National Voter Registration Day 2019. Additionally, [ALA partnered with Democracy Class](#) to offer libraries a free curriculum that educates high-school-aged students about the importance and history of voting and pre-registers and registers them to vote.

ALA continues library education and policy advocacy on the 2020 Census

On July 11, the White House announced it would abandon efforts to add a question about citizenship status to the 2020 Census. On June 27, the Supreme Court had [ruled against](#) the administration's proposed addition, removing a significant distraction from preparations for a complete count.

ALA continues to add resources at www.ala.org/census. Since publishing the [Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census](#) in May, ALA has begun releasing two-page tip sheets for libraries and community leaders, including:

- ["How Can My Library Increase Awareness of 2020 Census Hiring"](#)
- ["2020 Census: Key Facts for Libraries"](#)
- ["How Community Leaders Can Partner with Libraries to Achieve a Complete Count"](#)
- [An explanation of the decision to not include a citizenship question on the 2020 Census](#)

ALA also continues [working in coalition](#) to support the full funding needed to enable a successful census. ALA Census Task Force Chair Tracy Strobel led a national tele-town hall meeting for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which has a potential reach of 500,000 AARP members. ALA staff also have spoken about libraries and the 2020 Census with a variety of stakeholders, including United for Libraries.

On September 17 PPA facilitated the launch of Library Census Champions, a collaborative effort between United for Libraries and the Census Counts campaign to establish a new network of state, local and tribal library Trustees helping their libraries and communities prepare for the 2020 Census. Elected and appointed library Trustees can sign up to become a Library Census Champion at <http://bit.ly/LibraryCensusChampions>, which includes free information, resources, and actions to take to ensure a fair and accurate census. The program was introduced in a live webinar hosted by United for Libraries on October 1.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

U.S. Court of Appeals provides mixed decision on net neutrality

On October 1, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit upheld the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) authority to issue its 2018 Order eliminating network neutrality protections while also vacating parts of the order and remanding other parts. Importantly, the court vacated the portion of the Order in which the FCC attempted to preempt state or local efforts to protect an open internet. In the case—*Mozilla et al v. Federal Communications Commission (FCC)*—consumer groups and some companies sought to restore net neutrality protections that the FCC passed in 2015 but eliminated in 2017. ALA President Wanda Brown issued a statement the [same day](#). ALA will continue to work with open internet advocates to plan next steps for action.

ALA files FCC comments to extend current budget system with improvements

In September ALA filed two sets of comments with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in its most recent E-rate [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) seeking stakeholder input on whether the current category 2 (C2) budget system for internal connections (including Wi-Fi) funding should be made permanent after its five-year test period. ALA fully supports the C2 budget system as more libraries than ever before are now receiving funds, including rural remote libraries as well as those in urban centers. There are, however, improvements the FCC could make to ensure all libraries benefit from the availability of funding. ALA comments called for an increase in library budgets, a series of steps to simplify the process as it is made permanent, and the inclusion of filtering and security software and tools as eligible for funding.

OTHER POLICY ISSUES

PPA speaks on behalf of ALA members on policy and legislation at every level of government. The following list includes a sampling of congressional testimony, comments filed with federal agencies and coalition letters which ALA has endorsed with its name, a coveted asset among allies and coalition partners from across the political spectrum:

- [Letter](#) to support bipartisan and bicameral legislation that would create a pilot summer learning and meals grant program. The Summer Meals and Learning Act was introduced by Senator Merkley (D-OR) in the Senate and by Congressmen Morelle (D-NY-25) and Katko (R-NY-24) in the House. Diana Price – a Virginia librarian participated in a

Congressional briefing outlining how libraries and schools provide summer learning and meal programs.

- [Amicus brief](#) with the Supreme Court filed by The American Library Association, along with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the Society of American Archivists (SAA) and the Software Preservation Network (SPN) in support of the respondent in *Allen vs Cooper* regarding the elimination of state sovereign immunity with respect to copyright claims. State funded institutions rely on sovereign immunity to limit exposure to damages liability in a federal copyright case. The brief focused on the importance of sovereign immunity to institutions engaged in digital preservation.
- [Coalition letter](#) to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation to work towards closing the rural digital divide, promoting competition, and making 5G more available and affordable for all Americans. The letter requests that underutilized “C-band” of public airwaves between 3700 and 4200 MHz be reallocated through a public auction; and supports authorizing shared access to unused mid-band spectrum for use by small and rural operators.
- [Coalition letter](#) to the House of Representatives regarding the Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act, H.R. 736 to improve government transparency and create a central repository of agency reports submitted to Congress.
- [Coalition letter](#) to oppose the CASE Act that excessively penalizes users of online platforms for basic content sharing.
- [Coalition letter](#) to support robust funding for the 2020 Census and invest in key activities such as cybersecurity, outreach to hard-to-count populations and collaborating with local partners.