**EBD #12.41**

**2017-2018**

**TO:** ALA Executive Board

**RE:** Washington Office Report

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

No action requested

**CONTACT PERSON:**

Kathi Kromer, Associate Executive Director

(202) 628-8410

kkromer@alawash.org

**DATE:** June 1, 2018

**BACKGROUND:**

Report of activities of ALA’s Washington Office

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Washington Office Report

**ALA WASHINGTON OFFICE REPORT**

WASHINGTON OFFICE NEWS

**Washington Office welcomes NLLD 2018 attendees**

On May 7-8, the ALA Washington Office welcomed over 480 attendees to Washington, D.C. for the 44th annual [National Library Legislative Day](https://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/05/library-supporters-gear-up-for-year-round-advocacy/) (NLLD). Among the attendees were advocates from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, who were joined by over 1,000 viewers participating virtually in the [livestreamed](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFYnmkKCNsY&t=175s) event. Nearly half of those participating were first-time NLLD attendees. In his introduction, ALA President Jim Neal focused on persistence in advocacy efforts over the long term, saying “The thing about advocacy is that it’s year-round. It’s about cultivating a relationship that earns the trust of lawmakers and wins victories, step by step over time.”

This year, participants were asked to focus on three strategic asks: ask members of Congress to fully fund federal library programs; reauthorize the Museum and Library Services Act; and visit a library to see broadband access in action. A smaller number of delegations in strategically critical states and congressional districts were also asked to advocate for the Marrakesh Treaty and the Tribal Connect Act (see “Federal Legislation,” below). The program included mock meetings, state delegation caucusing and panels of seasoned advocates from ALA’s Committee on Legislation and across the ALA community. Speakers included ALA President Jim Neal; Brad Fitch, CEO of the Congressional Management Foundation; and policy experts from around D.C. The event was also attended by several members of the Corporate Committee for Library Investment, including Steve Potash (OverDrive), Skip Dye (Penguin Random House) and Paul Gazzolo (Gale Cengage).

On Tuesday, advocates made their way to the Hill for more than 325 congressional meetings, while virtual attendees began calling and sending emails to their legislators. Since the event, the Museum and Library Services Act and the Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act (see “Federal Legislation,” below) have each gained three new cosponsors, respectively.

In the week that followed NLLD, attendees received an invitation to participate in a follow-up advocacy training webinar by the Congressional Management Foundation to equip ALA members to plan their own events as they begin to issue invitations for their elected officials to visit their library. The webinar addressed best practices related to inviting members of Congress to attend local events.

**ALA Policy Corps Comes to Washington for Advocacy, Training**

The initial cohort of the ALA Policy Corps came to Washington to participate in National Library Legislative Day and a follow-on training workshop on communications. This training featured sessions on public presentations and media outreach, with the latter co-led by ALA’s Macey Morales. The Corps also met with the Working Group that oversees the ALA Policy Corps for a check-in on the initiative.

**National Library Week events on Capitol Hill inspire congressional partnership on broadband**

For the 2018 National Library Week, the WO and ALA President Jim Neal hosted [events](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/making-space-for-libraries-on-capitol-hill-during-national-library-week/) to showcase the role of libraries in providing internet connectivity and advancing the new workforce through innovation and entrepreneurship. An afternoon [reception](http://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/04/library-makerspaces-on-capitol-hill/) co-hosted with Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM-3) in Longworth House Office Building on Wednesday, April 11, highlighted how libraries are advancing the maker economy and featured librarians and technology from the D.C. Public Library’s Fabrication Lab. Rep. Lujan reinforced his support for libraries and their value in providing connectivity (see below). On Thursday, April 12, the WO co-hosted a luncheon [panel](http://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/04/ala-spotlights-broadband-in-tribal-and-rural-libraries/) at the Capitol Visitors Center with Senator Martin Heinrich (D-NM) focusing on internet connectivity in Tribal libraries and rural communities. Moderated by ALA Spectrum Scholar Elayne Silversmith, branch librarian from the National Museum of the American Indian’s Cultural Resources Center, the panel featured librarians and telecommunications experts from across the country, including Cynthia Aguilar, a member of the Navajo Tribe and librarian with the Santo Domingo Pueblo in New Mexico, as well as Hannah Buckland, former Director of Library Services at Leech Lake Tribal College and member of the ALA Policy Corps. The panel included a discussion of the [Tribal Connect Act](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/tribal-connect-act-bringing-broadband-tribal-lands/) (see below). Remarks from outgoing Federal Communications Commissioner Mignon Clyburn inspired the audience, which included participants in a [simultaneous #critlib Twitter chat](http://critlib.org/twitter-chats/upcoming-twitter-chats/).

WASHINGTON OFFICE ADVOCACY OUTREACH

**WO, PLA continue preparations for U.S. Census 2020**

The 2020 Census will be the first decennial census to provide an online response option, and this new e-government option may bring large numbers of users into libraries to complete their census questionnaire. WO staff are [collaborating](https://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/04/gearing-up-2020-census/) with Census Bureau staff, Census stakeholders and library leaders to ensure libraries are informed about the 2020 Census and can plan for potential demands. PLA and the OITP Advisory Committee will co-convene a 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force to advise ALA’s efforts, with a target first meeting at Annual 2018. The Census Bureau will also host an exhibit booth at Annual 2018 as a form of outreach to libraries. ALA is in discussions with the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality about a potential collaboration to produce information [resources](https://civilrights.org/new-report-highlights-opportunities-risks-first-high-tech-census/) about the 2020 Census for library audiences and include library perspectives in future Census reports. ALA has also talked with the City University of New York’s Center for Urban Research about including library locations in their [mapping services](https://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/) related to the 2020 Census. COL chair Kent Oliver is scheduled to represent libraries on a panel about the 2020 Census at the National Association of Counties’ [conference](http://www.naco.org/events/nacos-83rd-annual-conference-exposition) in July. ALA leaders also are scheduled to meet with Department of Commerce and Census Bureau leaders in June to discuss library outreach and engagement.

**ALA Honors FCC Commissioner Clyburn**

The public interest community in D.C. held an event to honor retiring FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn. ALA co-hosted the [event](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/where-do-we-go-from-here-words-from-the-conscience-of-the-fcc-tickets-45598015893) with such notable coalition partners as Common Cause and the National Hispanic Media Coalition. Clyburn gave a rousing [address](https://twitter.com/AlanSInouye/status/994375332680564736) about broadband as the technology of opportunity, emphasizing that no community should be left behind. Several [members](https://twitter.com/AlanSInouye/status/994378613037457408) of the ALA Policy Corps were able to attend.

**Policy Director Discusses Federal Libraries at FEDLINK Event**

Public Policy Director Dr. Alan Inouye presented at the [FEDLINK](https://twitter.com/AlanSInouye/status/991769258454634497) Spring Exposition at the Library of Congress. On a panel focused on the future of federal libraries, Inouye focused his remarks on promoting awareness of the library and its resources and accomplishments within the agency and beyond. Also on the panel were Teri DeVoe of IMLS and FCC Library Director Amanda Costigan.

**Libraries Ready to Code prepares to release beta collection of resources**

The Ready to Code (RtC) cohort libraries are preparing for the release of the beta version of ALA’s Libraries Ready to Code Collection at Annual. The RtC cohort libraries, working in small groups, are reviewing and tagging resources from lesson plans to program assessments to websites, analog games and technology-based coding programs. Cohort members have also been working with the RtC team to develop library personas and strategy briefs, all of which will be available for beta testing at the RtC/Google exhibit at Annual. The RtC team is preparing a feedback survey for input from the wider library community after Annual. Cohort members started sharing information about their projects on the [District Dispatch](https://www.districtdispatch.org/?s=ready+to+code), with one post each week through Annual.

**Washington Office in the field**

As part of our strategic plan, WO continues our commitment to spending time in the field, connecting with library workers of all kinds. This spring, Kathi Kromer delivered the keynote address for Alexandria (Va.) Public Library’s annual staff retreat and professional development day. Her presentation, “The Pulse of National & Local Library Issues,” highlighted the connections between advocacy and federal, state and local issues. Kromer also attended the Council of State Archivists’ Annual Partner Briefing at the National Archives and Records Administration building, where she gave an update on ALA’s policy priorities and heard from our archivist and museum partners.

Other WO staff made several visits to local libraries. WO Asst. Director of Public Policy Marike Visser, along with Shawnda Hines and Emily Wagner on the Communications team, observed a local Libraries Ready to Code program focusing on preschool children and their families at the Francis Gregory Library in Southeast Washington, D.C. During National Library Week, Grassroots Communications Specialist Lisa Lindle accompanied WO’s spring intern to the Smithsonian Libraries’ open house, where they met with an assortment of practitioners in the field. During National School Library Month, Emily Wagner worked with the American Association of School Librarians and Sylvia Norton to highlight Jason Reynolds’ speaking engagement with DC Public Schools library. Emily live-tweeted his talk at the Columbia Heights Educational Center in Northwest D.C.

**Director of Program on Public Access to Information speak at copyright conference**

On June 6, Carrie Russell, director of ALA’s Program on Public Access to Information, will provide the closing keynote remarks at the [Kraemer Copyright Conference](https://www.uccs.edu/copyright/) at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Her topic will focus on how the policy process works with the Marrakesh Treaty serving as a case study.

**Washington Office hosts library groups**

WO continues to open its office doors, most recently by hosting a lunch with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), whose new Executive Director Mary Lee Kennedy was appointed in April 2018. Kennedy’s shared her plans to build on ARL's strengths as a leader and partner in the research and learning ecosystem and as a culture that embraces innovation, diversity and inclusion.

In early June, WO looks forward to hosting DCLA, DCPL and LC GLOBE, the Library of Congress LGBTQ+ Employee Organization, ahead of Washington’s annual Pride Parade on Saturday, June 9. Librarians representing the LGBTQ+ community will gather at ALA ‘s office in Dupont Circle, where the parade begins, for poster-making and light refreshments.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY UPDATES

**FEDERAL LIBRARY FUNDING AND PROGRAMS**

**ALA urges congressional appropriators to fund libraries in FY 2019**

The successful FY 2019 Dear Appropriator [campaign](https://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/04/record-number-of-signatures-in-the-senate/) continued in the U.S. Senate following weeks of calls and emails by ALA members throughout April. The end result of this year’s Senate campaign was a [letter](https://districtdispatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Reed-Collins-FY19-Library-Services-and-Technology-Act-Request-Letter-FINAL.pdf) in support of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) led by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Susan Collins (R-ME) and signed by 46 senators. A similar [letter](https://districtdispatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Reed-Innovative-Approaches-to-Literacy-FINAL.pdf) in support of the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program was led by Senators Jack Reed and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and signed by 35 Senators.

Also in April, ALA submitted [comments](https://districtdispatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/FY-2019-ALA-Written-Testimony-for-the-Record-Final.pdf) to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services, Education Subcommittee and Related Agencies in support of funding for LSTA and IAL (Senate comments are due early June). Following the passage of the [FY 2018 omnibus spending package](https://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/03/big-federal-funding-increases-for-libraries/) with increases for many library programs and level funding for other programs, the White House submitted a [rescission package](https://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/04/rescission/) calling for cuts to many programs, though none directly affecting library funding. The rescission package is unlikely to pass, though the administration may suggest additional programs to cut in the future.

In addition to individual meetings with members of Congress and their staffs, WO staff also worked with coalition partners throughout the spring to advocate for federal funding. ALA participated in a broad education (more than 100 education groups) funding event in April that included the release of a response to the president’s FY 2019 budget issued by the education community. ALA helped plan the release of the budget book, a compendium of major education programs, which included two chapters written by ALA in support of LSTA and IAL. WO staff also served as section editor for lifelong learning programs.

**ALA continues to press for reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act (**[S.2271](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2271?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22museum+and+library+services+act+of+2017%22%5D%7D&r=1))

The WO continues to work with members to gain cosponsors for the Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA), introduced in December 2017 by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) along with Senators Collins (R-ME), Cochran (R-MS), Gillibrand (D-NY) and Murkowski (R-AK). The legislation would reauthorize IMLS, including improvements such as expanding program access for Tribal libraries and allowing grant funds to be used for disaster preparation and response. ALA has focused efforts on gaining support of members of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. As of June 1, the bill has 15 cosponsors. WO staff continue to work with Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) on a House companion to Senator Reed’s bill. With support from ALA, Rep. Grijalva is currently soliciting Republicans to join the bill as original cosponsors to the bill.

**WO promotes application for federal Innovative Approaches to Literacy grants**

ALA [notified](https://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/04/school-library-literacy-grants-available/) members of the availability of IAL Grants. The program provides $27 million in federal funding to support the improvement of literacy skills for youth in high-need schools and communities. At least half of all IAL grants are reserved for the development and improvement of effective school library programs. Of note this year, the Department of Education placed a priority on funding proposals that meet specific priorities, especially those promoting STEM education.

**COPYRIGHT POLICY**

**Marrakesh Treaty proceeds to the full Senate**

On May 23, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted unanimously to support the Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act ([S. 2559](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2559/)). A full Senate vote requires a two-thirds majority vote before going to the president for signature. The international copyright treaty provides a copyright exception—the first ever in an international treaty—for libraries as authorized entities to make copies of entire articles and books accessible for people with print disabilities and distribute those copies across borders. If the Marrakesh Treaty Implementation Act is passed and signed by the president, the bill will greatly increase access for English speakers with print disabilities, particularly in developing countries, where less than 1% of all published print content is accessible. The U.S. will benefit as well by being able to obtain foreign-language content, especially for Spanish speakers with print disabilities.

**WO supports alternative music legislation**

On May 23rd, Senator Wyden introduced the Accessibility for Curators, Creators, Educators, Scholars, and Society Recordings (ACCESS) Act as an alternative to the CLASSICS Act [(S. 2393)](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2393). The ACCESS Act also deals with the copyright status of pre-1972 sound recordings. It would provide full copyright protection to pre-1972 sound recordings that are currently protected by state law. ACCESS is preferred because with full federalization also comes all exceptions and limitations of copyright law. Preservation is a growing concern for archivists and music librarians who hold large collections of rare and one-of-a-kind collections in their libraries. ACCESS would allow library and archival preservation of sound recordings. It would also reduce the term of copyright to 95 years after publication, a term more in line with the rest of the copyright law and significantly better than a public domain until the year 2067 proposed in the CLASSICS Act. In addition to the WO and the Library Copyright Alliance, who issued a statement endorsing the [legislation](http://www.librarycopyrightalliance.org/storage/documents/ACCESStorecordingsPR_CH.pdf), numerous other copyright advocates support the bills, including R Street, Public Knowledge, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the Internet Archive and the Music Library Association. Hill meetings are scheduled for the next two weeks.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY AND PROGRAMS**

**Net neutrality advocacy continues on multiple fronts**

ALA members and net neutrality allies continue to increase pressure to reinstate net neutrality protections that were gutted by a December 2017 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) vote. On May 15, ALA led a [press call](https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-05-14-schools-can-t-police-providers-education-leaders-call-for-restoration-of-net-neutrality-rules) focusing on the importance of net neutrality for libraries, educational institutions and rural communities. On May 16, the Senate [voted](https://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/05/senate-to-vote-today-to-attempt-to-save-net-neutrality/) 52-47 to pass legislation under the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to block the FCC’s December 2017 rollback of net neutrality rules. With the passage of the CRA in the Senate, action moves to the House, which must also vote on the CRA. An ALA [action alert](http://cqrcengage.com/ala/app/write-a-letter?0&engagementId=443593) has generated more than 5,400 emails through the legislative action center since mid-December. The December 2017 Order will [take effect](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-internet/fcc-says-net-neutrality-rules-will-end-in-june-idUSKBN1IB1UN) June 11 if the CRA effort is unsuccessful. ALA is working with other library and higher education groups to file an amicus brief this summer in support of the legal challenge to the FCC’s order.

**Advocates from target states urge cosponsors for the Tribal Connect Act**

Delegations from target states met with their members of Congress during National Library Legislative Day (NLLD) to discuss the Tribal Connect Act and seek additional cosponsors for the bill. The current strategy is a focus on Republican members of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, which is considering the Senate version of the bill ([S. 2205](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/2205)), and of the House Communications and Technology Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which is considering the companion legislation in the House ([H.R. 5661](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5661)). There are now three cosponsors for the Senate version and five for the House bill. WO staff continue outreach to target congressional offices and are connecting with the state libraries for continued grasstops advocacy efforts to secure local library support. 

**Federal USAC solicits ALA input on improving E-rate program training**

Marijke Visser attended an invitation-only meeting with the new CEO and several staff of the federal Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), the organization that implements and oversees the FCC’s E-rate program, to discuss their applicant training and outreach workshops. State E-rate coordinators from Montana, Ohio, and Arkansas as well as the library representative on the USAC Board attended by phone. The CEO also held a smaller gathering to discuss future directions and stakeholder priorities for the next few months and through 2019. Marijke attended on behalf of libraries. As part of our ongoing E-rate advocacy with the FCC and USAC, we submitted a letter detailing issues with the yearly training workshops held by USAC. Suggestions from ALA’s E-rate task force included having a beginner track as well as focusing on the needs of the state E-rate coordinators who require more in-depth information than attendees who are new to the program.  We look forward to continuing to provide input to the FCC and USAC on their training and outreach activities to ensure library applicants have the information and resources they need to submit successful applications.

**ALA successfully advocates for E-rate applicants denied eligibility for faulty FCC form**

Thanks to the advocacy of ALA and others, in May the FCC directed USAC not to reject E-rate requests FY 2018 because of discrepancies caused by con­fusion over USAC changes to its online menu for submitting a form for competitive service bids. ALA had submitted a letter to the FCC in March recommending that the FCC instruct USAC not to issue any funding denials based on the Form 470 drop-down option that applicants selected. In addition, ALA strongly suggested that USAC correct the Form 470 drop down options before the July 1, 2018, start of filing the Form 470 for the 2019 program year. Senior Policy Advocate Marijke Visser was quoted in Washington Communications Daily: “The additional directive for FY 2019 will prevent further confusion and ensure fair consideration for every library that invests time and energy into the E-rate application process.”

**FCC calls out librarians as adult digital literacy trainers**

As part of the FCC’s ongoing effort to encourage digital literacy among older adults, FCC consumer relations staff is working with the Washington Office to connect with ALA members conducting older adult digital literacy programs. ALA is identified as an outreach collaborator on the [website](https://www.fcc.gov/news-events/blog/2018/05/24/older-americans-and-broadband-getting-connected) for the new campaign, *Older Americans and Broadband: Get Connected.* FCC consumer relations staff will attend Annual conference and confer with a group of librarians to learn more about older adult services and identify best practices and then publicize older adult digital literacy programs offered at public libraries across the country.

**GOVERNMENT INFORMATION POLICY**

**ALA continues advocacy for modernizing Federal Depository Library Program**

On April 12, the Committee on House Administration [approved](http://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/04/house-committee-approves-fdlp-modernization-act/) the bipartisan FDLP Modernization Act of 2018 ([H.R. 5305](http://www.districtdispatch.org/2018/03/long-awaited-fdlp-modernization-act-strengthen-public-access-government-information/)). The bill is cosponsored by all the members of that committee, led by Chairman Gregg Harper (R-MS) and Ranking Member Bob Brady (D-PA), who are both retiring from Congress after this year. The bill would modernize the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) to improve public access to government information. The bill was developed with input from the library community following a series of [public hearings](http://www.districtdispatch.org/2017/09/20-years-house-hearing-focuses-depository-libraries/) in 2017 which included testimony from librarians, and it incorporates many of the [recommendations](http://www.districtdispatch.org/2017/09/dear-congress-heres-ensure-public-access-government-information/) ALA sent to the committee. The committee noted the support of ALA and other library associations at the markup. The committee is expected to issue a report accompanying the bill in early June. The bill has also been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. ALA and other stakeholders are advocating for that committee to approve or discharge the bill so that it can proceed to the House floor.