

TO: ALA Council

DATE: January 17, 2024

RE: (select one)

ACTION REQUESTED

INFORMATION

REPORT

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Action requested from Councilors is to cast their vote to:

Approve the “Resolution Urging Library Workers and Supporters to Participate in the 2024 Elections,” the Committee on Legislation’s report.

ACTION REQUESTED BY: Committee on Legislation

CONTACT PERSON: Ed Garcia, COL Chair

STAFF LIAISON CONTACT: Kevin Maher

**Report to Council
2024 Annual Conference
Ed Garcia, Chair - ALA Committee on Legislation (COL)**

COL Committee Members:

Ed Garcia (Chair), Kate Alderete, Tania Bardyn, Deborah Doyle, Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Lori Fisher, Dr. Ursula Gorham, Susan Hempstead, Kathy Lester, Dr. Maria McCauley, James G. Neal, Sherry Virginia Neal, Kent Oliver, Jana Stevenson, Joseph Thompson, Lisa L. Wells, Sara Dallas (Executive Board Liaison)

COL Charge

The ALA Council Committee on Legislation (COL) is charged with the responsibility for the association's legislative agenda. Specifically, to:

- Identify, for the Public Policy & Advocacy Office, the association's strategic priorities.
- Recommend, annually, based on consultation with the Public Policy & Advocacy Office, a legislative and public policy agenda.
- Review and advise on any policy statements and/or resolutions that have an impact on federal legislation, policy, or regulations.
- Provide a forum within ALA to share information and legislative analysis of current and impending federal laws and regulations to keep ALA units apprised of current issues affecting libraries.
- Be available to consult, collaborate and offer assistance to state and local library entities when federal legislation has implications at the state and local level.

COL Legislative Agenda

At the Fall COL retreat in November and December 2023, COL discussed and approved the Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2024 (attached to this report). The agenda is focused on four key areas: Funding; Digital Inclusion and Skills; Copyright, Licensing and Competition; and Government Information and Services.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Spring Executive Board meetings

COL Chair Ed Garcia and Interim PPA Associate Executive Director Alan Inouye reported to the Executive Board on April 21 about COL and PPA activities.

COSLA Liaison

COL created a liaison role with the Chief Officer of State Library Agencies (COSLA) Public Policy Committee. Karen Mellor, the Chief of Library Services in Rhode Island was appointed to a two-year term as liaison.

AASL President's Award Presented to Arizona Rep. Grijalva

In May, AASL Past President and COL member Kathy Lester presented her AASL President's Crystal Apple award to Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ-07) for his work on introducing the Right to Read Act in the House of Representatives. The Crystal Apple is awarded to an individual or group who has had a significant impact on school libraries and students. Lester chose to award the 2023 award to Rep. Grijalva and Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) who introduced the companion bill in the Senate (award previously presented to Sen. Reed). The Right to Read Act addresses disparities in access to school library resources and calls for increases in investment to support student literacy. Due to ill health, Kathy Lester presented her award to his key staff, Nick Dicorato and Dorothy Holley. (<https://x.com/ALALibrary/status/1789026649406669290>)

RESOLUTIONS

Gaza resolutions at LibLearnX

COL provided feedback to the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) and the International Relations Committee (IRC) on two resolutions concerning the conflict in Gaza. COL took no official position on either resolution. The resolutions were introduced to Council at the 2024 LibLearnX meeting.

Resolution in Defense of Anti-War Protestors' Freedom of Expression and Assembly

Representatives from the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) attended the June 13, 2024 COL meeting to discuss their proposed "Resolution in Defense of Anti-War Protestors' Freedom of Expression and Assembly." The committee voted to **oppose** the resolution as presented. The committee provided the following rationale for its opposition. The proposed resolution would call on ALA to take a position on two pending bills in Congress, H.R. 6408 and S. 4136, so the resolution is directly related to federal legislation. ALA has not currently taken a position on either piece of legislation, as neither has a direct impact on libraries or library workers. The resolution does not attempt to articulate any such impact. The bills do not directly relate to the priorities identified in the ALA Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda as adopted by COL in December 2023. ALA and the PPA office have limited resources that should be directed to the priority areas that directly affect libraries as outlined in the Legislative Agenda. In addition, the significant controversy surrounding these bills and the risk that taking a position on them would cause harm to ALA's reputation and political relationships would directly affect ALA's efforts to advocate to Congress for our legislative and policy priorities.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY UPDATES

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

ALA Active on Appropriations

ALA launched its [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2025 #FundLibraries campaign](#) in March, hosting a congressional fly-in with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) March 6-7 in Washington, DC. The two-day event included a [briefing day](#) emceed by COL Chair Ed Garcia. at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library and dozens of [in-person visits](#) with targeted members of Congress and congressional staff on Capitol Hill. Also in March, ALA welcomed [passage of the FY 24 budget](#), which included level funding for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) programs as well as most library-eligible federal funding. In April, ALA urged chapters and grassroots advocates to call on their members of Congress to sign “Dear Appropriator” letters in support of library funding. The letters called for \$232 million in LSTA funding and \$50 million in IAL funding.

Thanks to library advocates across the nation, 41 Senators signed on to support LSTA and 33 signed on to support IAL – both nearly matching last year’s totals. Both letters were led by longtime library champion Senator Jack Reed (D-RI). In the House, a bipartisan group of 104 members signed on to support LSTA, while 61 signed on to support IAL. The LSTA letter was led by Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ-07) and Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE-02), while the IAL letters was led by Reps. Jim McGovern (D-MA-02) and Bacon.

When ALA’s PPA office asked library advocates to reach out and show the demand for these crucial programs, they responded in even greater numbers than last year. Library advocates sent over 20,000 messages to Congress over the last month! If you are not signed up yet, you can join ALA’s advocacy email at www.ala.org/advocacy/fund-libraries.

In March, the White House also weighed in by presenting its budget recommendations. While the Administration’s recommendation of \$30 million for IAL matched last year’s level of support, ALA was disappointed to see a recommendation of a decrease of \$7.8 million for LSTA.

With the Dear Appropriator campaign now completed, House and Senate Appropriators begin the work on putting together the federal budget. Federal spending falls into two categories: mandatory and discretionary. Library funding, like most education funding, is discretionary which means programs can be increased, decreased, or eliminated on a year-by-year basis. In May, Rep. Jim McGovern, co-lead on the IAL letter in the House, made a personal pitch to the House Appropriations Committee for funding this important school library program at the annual “Members Day” when Representatives can appear before the committee in person.

IMLS names acting director

On March 21, 2024, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) [announced](#) the departure of Director Crosby Kemper following the end of his four-year term. IMLS Deputy Director for Library Services Cyndee Landrum was named Acting Director. Ms. Landrum has served as Deputy Director for Library Services since 2019, and previously served as CEO of the Evansville (IN) Vanderburgh Public Library, assistant director for Oak Park (IL) Library and Mt. Lebanon (PA) Public Library, and president of the Arizona Library Association. Ms. Landrum will serve as Acting Director until the President nominates,

and the Senate confirms, a qualified individual to serve as the next IMLS Director. Pursuant to the Museum and Library Services Act, the next Director shall be an individual who has “special competence with regard to museum services.”

ALA welcomes national studies of library facilities

Two upcoming national studies will provide important new information about the condition of and need for library facilities nationwide. ALA successfully advocated for Congress to direct the studies, which are being conducted by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and by IMLS. At ALA Annual Conference 2024, ALA will present a program with the GAO and IMLS researchers, “Understanding Needs for Library Facilities: Upcoming National Studies,” on Saturday, June 29, at 10:30 a.m. in the Marriott Marquis, Grand Ballroom Section 03.

Right to Read Act Continues to Gain Support in Congress

The introduction of the **Right to Read Act** by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Representative Raul Grijalva (D-AZ-07) proved to be a strong messaging bill that school librarians are important participants in determining student success. This landmark legislation continues to gain cosponsors. As of June 1, the House bill (**H.R. 2889**) had secured 46 cosponsors while the Senate bill (**S. 1307**) now has seven cosponsors. The Act calls for a \$600 million investment in school library literacy programs and addresses disparities in access to school library resources. Recognizing the challenges facing many school librarians, the Act reaffirms that first amendment rights apply to school libraries. In addition to these cosponsors, the list of outside advocates endorsing this important legislation includes the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, PEN America, and National Council of Teachers of English. While not likely to pass this year, the growing support for the work of school librarians through the introduction of this Act helps build momentum for next year’s expected reintroduction.

ALA endorses workforce development legislation aligned with ALA priorities

There is bipartisan interest in both houses of Congress to pursue legislation to reauthorize WIOA. ALA has been actively advocating building on funding and recognition of libraries providing workforce development programs and services. Of note, the House passed the Stronger Workforce for America Act on a bipartisan basis on April 9. ALA endorsed H.R. 6655 and our quote/letter was cited by both parties; it is now with the Senate for consideration. ALA also supported the bipartisan and bicameral “Digital Skills for Today’s Workforce Act,” which was also introduced in April. This bill’s focus on skills building is aligned with ALA asks related to digital and information literacy in WIOA reauthorization. People are cautiously optimistic reauthorization will be passed this year, and there is increased recognition of libraries in both House and Senate bills.

DIGITAL INCLUSION & SKILLS

FCC Chairwoman at the Connecticut Library Association Conference

COL Chair Ed Garcia moderated a Q&A session with FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel at the Connecticut Library Association Conference in Mystic, CT on April 29.

Digital Inclusion Working Group

ALA launched the Digital Inclusion Working Group for libraries in January in collaboration with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA). The Digital Inclusion Working Group hosts monthly meetings

on Zoom and asynchronous discussions on ALA Connect. All are welcome to join. Topics include the Digital Equity Act, E-rate and Learn Without Limits, navigating federal grants, and more.

E-rate Hotspot Lending

ALA submitted [comments](#) on the E-rate hotspot notice of proposed rulemaking in January and has followed this emerging program closely. The policy team has had ongoing conversations with FCC staff and partners about the program to ensure its success, written letters, and participated in advocacy and outreach efforts to showcase the ways libraries use hotspot lending in their communities. The order launching the program is anticipated in summer 2024. In April, COL Chair Ed Garcia participated in a fireside chat with Chairwoman Rosenworcel at the Connecticut Library Association Conference about the FCC's Learn Without Limits initiatives and other related broadband topics.

Cybersecurity Pilot Program

ALA submitted [comments](#) on the Cybersecurity Pilot Program in January, [reply comments](#) in February, and participated in advocacy around this program with coalition partners. ALA and partners filed a [letter](#) and conducted a round of meetings with FCC staff to request funding clarifications and call attention to funding concerns for libraries in the draft order in May. The FCC held a vote on the pilot program proposal on June 6.

Net Neutrality

The net neutrality order, restoring protections that safeguard the open internet, was voted on and adopted on April 25. The order will take effect on July 22. ALA filed comments on net neutrality in December.

Technical Assistance on the Digital Equity Act

ALA led and partnered on a number of webinars to provide technical assistance to the field:

- *How Libraries Can Upgrade Their Internet Through the BEAD Program* webinar with SHLB, ALA, COSLA (2/21)
- *NTIA Advancing Digital Equity Strategies: Federal Programs and State Partnerships* webinar with ALA, ULC, COSLA, ARSL (4/15)
- *Digital Equity Champions for All Learners: Partnering to Advance Digital Equity* webinar with ALA, Commonsense Media, CCSO (4/17)

Affordable Connectivity Program

ALA participated in ongoing ACP advocacy and outreach including:

- [Don't Disconnect US Day](#) (2/25);
- Leading an advocacy campaign with members to send letters to their representatives;
- An interview with CNN for [ACP article](#);
- Attending the [ACP Rally](#) in DC (4/30);
- Publishing [op-ed](#) by ALA President Emily Drabinski; and
- Working with coalition partners in the Affordable Broadband Campaign to raise awareness and provide various quotes and statements

Eyes on the Board advocacy

ALA signed on to three letters with coalition partners voicing concerns about the inclusion of the Eyes on the Board bill in the Protecting Kids on Social Media Act. The bill would have required schools to certify that social media sites were blocked and filters in place in order to receive E-rate funds. The markup for this bill was cancelled, in part because of mounting opposition, but it may be rescheduled for later in the year.

COPYRIGHT, LICENSING & COMPETITION**ALA, coalition partners weigh in on intellectual property issues**

Working with the Library Copyright Alliance (LCA), ALA submitted [comments to the U.S. Copyright Office](#) with the Software Preservation Network, drafted by the Cyberlaw Clinic, Harvard Law School, to propose expansion of the video game and software preservation exemptions, respectively (37 C.F.R. § 201.40(b)(17, 18)) as well as to DMCA exemptions regarding preservation for out-of-commerce software. Also with the LCA and a broader public interest coalition, ALA [opposed S. 835](#), the “Protecting and Enhancing Public Access to Codes Act” (Pro Codes Act). In addition, ALA, Public Knowledge, Electronic Frontier Foundation and others in the Sony v. Cox trial filed a [joint amicus brief](#) asking the appeals court to reconsider its finding on contributory infringement.

COL SUBCOMMITTEES AND TASKFORCES**Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) Reauthorization Task Force**

COL’s MLSA Reauthorization Task Force continues its work to collect stakeholder input regarding the next authorization of the act, which is set to expire September 2025. A history of the legislation can be found at <https://www.ims.gov/about/mission/legislation-budget/legislation>. As of May 24, 2024, the task force has met with individuals representing the following organizations:

- Senator Jack Reed’s (RI) office
- COSLA
- AASL
- ARSL
- ULC

The task force will hold a stakeholder input session during the ALA Annual Conference in San Diego on Saturday, June 29, 2024, 2:30pm – 3:30pm Pacific at the Manchester Grand Hyatt, Boardwalk Room. Conference attendees and members of ALA Council are invited to participate. Additional stakeholder input meetings are being scheduled through the end of August and a report will be provided to COL and PPA this fall.

Copyright, Legislation, Education and Advocacy Network (CLEAN)

CLEAN members provided policy briefings to the full Committee on Legislation at monthly meetings this year. Heather Briston presented on digital first sale at the January meeting, Kyle Courtney presented on

state-level ebook legislation at the February meeting, and Kathleen DeLaurenti presented on AI and copyright legislation at the April meeting.

OTHER PPA ACTIVITIES

ALA urges participation, civic engagement in 2024 elections

On April 10, 2024, ALA [launched](#) its “[Reader. Voter. Ready.](#)” campaign to inform and prepare library workers and supporters for this year’s elections, and to support libraries that provide voter engagement resources and services to their communities. ALA’s Public Policy and Advocacy office is managing the campaign. The campaign includes a [pledge](#) to be registered, informed, and ready to vote in the 2024 elections. Resources include a [voter engagement guide for libraries](#), a [tip sheet to share with community leaders and partners](#), and a [one-pager](#) illustrating libraries as centers of civic life. On May 7, 2024, ALA announced a national partnership with the League of Women Voters, and the organizations released a [collaboration toolkit](#) and co-hosted a webinar on May 29. In addition, ALA is a premier partner of National Voter Registration Day, and invites libraries to [register as community partners](#) and organize activities on September 17, 2024. At ALA Annual Conference 2024, ALA will present a program on the 2024 elections and what’s at stake for libraries, on Sunday, June 30, at 1 p.m. in the Marriott Marquis, Grand Ballroom Section 06. ALA will release additional resources through the summer and fall in advance of the November 5 elections.

Members of Congress Promote National Library Week

Members of Congress across the aisle in both chambers praised the work of local librarians during National Library Week, April 7 – 13 with events and on social media. Longtime library champion Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) held a NLW kickoff event at the Community Libraries of Providence announcing a \$100,000 “Reading Refresh” federal earmark included in the FY2024 funding bill. Among the Members promoting National Library Week included: Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Ed Markey (D-MA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), and Representatives Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34), Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA-06), Jim McGovern (D-MA-02), Katie Porter (D-CA- 47), Jamie Raskin (D-MD-08), and Lori Trahan (D-MA-03).

ALA & ACRL oppose elimination of Academic Libraries survey

On May 2, 2024, ALA and ACRL, along with the Association of Research Libraries and the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries, filed comments with the National Center for Education Statistics [opposing the agency’s plan to eliminate the Academic Libraries survey](#). The Academic Libraries survey is the only source of federal statistics about academic libraries, and has been collected in some form since the 1960s; these unique longitudinal data are widely used by academic libraries. This engagement builds on ALA’s other recent advocacy for improvements to federal data collection about school, academic, and public libraries.

ALA applauds Title IX rule prohibiting discrimination against LGBTQ+ students and library workers at Education Department-funded institutions

On April 19, 2024, the U.S. Department of Education released updated regulations implementing Title IX. ALA had supported the proposed rule, and [applauded its release](#). The rule codifies that Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity by recipients of Education Department funding, including schools, colleges, and some public libraries. Under the rule, those institutions can't discriminate against LGBTQ+ library workers or students in employment opportunities or the delivery of library services (e.g., removal of library materials in a discriminatory manner). In June, resolutions to overturn the new Title IX rule were filed in the House and Senate, which ALA is opposing.

TAKE ACTION

Please sign up for the Unite Against Book Bans campaign if you or your organization has not yet done so. Many have joined but many have not. <https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/>

You can subscribe to [ALA's advocacy alerts](#) to take targeted actions at key moments on federal policy. We only ask you to act when your advocacy is needed most. <http://ala.org/takeaction>

Also, if you want the latest library policy news and updates, please follow us on X at [@LibraryPolicy](#).

Thank you to the committee members that are cycling off this year for all their contributions: Tania Bardyn, Lori Fisher, Susan Hempstead and Joseph Thompson. Also special thanks to our PPA staff liaisons Kevin Maher and Marleen Coleman for their work with the committee.

American Library Association (ALA)**Committee on Legislation****Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2024**

Policymakers must ensure libraries are equipped to safely meet their communities' needs for technology access, education and learning, economic recovery and development, research, health and well-being, and civic engagement. Policies should support the contributions of libraries of all types, with emphasis on meeting the needs of underserved groups. Advancing access to information, sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion underpin and permeate our legislative advocacy. We will remain steadfast in our defense of intellectual freedom and library users' freedom to read.

ALA's Committee on Legislation encourages ALA members and library supporters to advocate on the following library priorities in 2024. ALA will monitor and engage on these and other [federal issues](#) that affect libraries and will join with partners and coalitions to promote strong and equitable libraries. We urge ALA members and library supporters to [sign up as advocates](#) and use [ALA's advocacy resources](#) to build effective relationships with decision makers. We will work to advance these agenda items before Congress and the Administration.

Funding and Support

[Equitable federal funding](#) for library services is essential to ensuring that every community in America has strong libraries. Key issues for 2024:

Dedicated library programs: Increase and maintain funding for the:

- Institute of Museum and Library Services, including the Library Services and Technology Act, and in the upcoming reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act;
- Innovative Approaches to Literacy program and support for [school libraries](#) through the Department of Education;
- Library facilities, sustainability, and resilience; and
- National library programs, including the Library of Congress, National Library of Medicine, National Agricultural Library, and the Federal Depository Library Program.

Library-eligible programs: Continue and enhance federal programs for which libraries are eligible recipients or partners. Recognize and support libraries' important roles in:

- K-12 and early education, including in reauthorizing the Every Student Succeeds Act;
- Higher education, including in reauthorizing the Higher Education Act;

- Economic and workforce development, including in reauthorizing the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#); and
- Other crucial community services, including through the National Endowment for the Humanities, Community Development Block Grants, and other applicable programs.

Library workers: Preserve library workers' eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness. Promote safe work environments for library workers.

IMLS Director: Timely nomination and confirmation of a qualified candidate to serve as the next Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Digital Inclusion and Skills

To promote digital equity, access to technology, and enable modern library services, libraries in all parts of the country must be able to serve their users with fast and affordable [broadband](#), technology access, and digital skills training. Key issues for 2024:

E-rate: Preserve funding for E-rate, improve libraries' access to the program, and expand eligible uses.

Internet access and digital equity: Preserve and expand resources for libraries to support Internet access and digital equity, such as activities under the Affordable Connectivity Program, Digital Equity Act, and Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program.

Content access and liability: Restore [net neutrality](#) protections. Preserve Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act liability protections for libraries.

Copyright, Licensing, and Competition

Libraries rely on balanced and flexible [copyright policy](#) to enable vital library services. ALA supports a modern copyright system with effective user rights and limitations and exceptions to copyright. Additionally, libraries rely on fair licenses and market practices in order to provide access to digital content such as [e-books](#). Key issues for 2024:

E-books and digital content: Prevent unfair and anti-competitive practices that limit libraries' ability to meet their users' reading and information needs, including by license terms that purport to restrict copyright exceptions.

Copyright Office: Maintain the Librarian of Congress' authority to manage and oversee the Copyright Office.

Government Information and Services

Libraries provide access to [government information](#) and services in communities across the country. ALA supports policies that assist libraries in providing no-fee permanent public access to government information and equitable access to government services, which includes voting. Key issues for 2024:

Federal Depository Library Program: Modernize the [Federal Depository Library Program](#).

Public access to research: Ensure public access to publicly funded research and data.

Resolution Urging Library Workers and Supporters to Participate in the 2024 Elections

Whereas libraries and library workers are facing many critical public policy issues, such as protecting the freedom to read, funding and support for libraries, broadband and technology access, fair copyright and competition, access to government information and services, and Public Service Loan Forgiveness for library workers; and

Whereas the American Library Association's Core Values underscores our commitment to upholding these issues; and

Whereas local, state, and federal elected officials make laws and policies affecting libraries and library workers; and

Whereas voters in many jurisdictions decide whether to approve ballot measures affecting libraries, such as bond issues, millages, and other referenda; and

Whereas many candidate and ballot measure elections held in 2024 will impact conditions for library workers and libraries' ability to serve their communities; and

Whereas participating in the electoral process is an opportunity to advocate for our profession, institutions, and values; and

Whereas the American Library Association for decades has provided resources to help libraries provide information and services that support library users' civic learning, voter registration, and voter participation; and

Whereas the American Library Association launched Reader Voter Ready in April 2024, a campaign to inform and prepare library workers and supporters for this year's elections, and to support libraries that provide voter engagement resources and services to their communities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members,

Urges all ALA members, library workers, and library supporters, to participate in the 2024 elections and future elections, including, as applicable, by registering to vote; confirming or updating their voter registration; informing themselves about races on their ballot; engaging with campaigns, colleagues, and community members; and voting.

Approved by the Committee on Legislation (June 13, 2024).