

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 “Tribute Resolution in Honor of FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel” included in the Committee on Legislation report.

ACTION REQUESTED BY: Committee on Legislation

CONTACT PERSON: Ed Garcia, COL Chair

STAFF LIAISON CONTACT: Kevin Maher

Report to Council
2025 ALA LibLearnX Council Meeting
Ed Garcia, Chair—ALA Committee on Legislation (COL)

COL Committee members: Ed Garcia (Chair), Kate Alderete, Glen Benedict, Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Deborah Doyle, Dr. Ursula Gorham, Lesliediana Jones, Kathy Lester, Dr. Maria McCauley, Jim Neal, Laura Belle Nelson, Kent Oliver, Jana Stevenson, Brad Warren, Sherry Virginia Neal (committee associate), Dolsy Smith (committee associate), 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.

Legislative Agenda

At the Fall COL retreat in November and December 2024, pursuant to the committee's charge, COL discussed and approved the Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2025 (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. The agenda also affirms, "We will remain steadfast in defending libraries, library workers, and the freedom to read, against political threats, including any attempts to criminalize the work of librarianship."

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Fall Executive Board meeting

COL Chair Ed Garcia and Interim AED Alan Inouye reported to the Executive Board at the Fall Board meeting on October 19th. Ed and Alan discussed election outlook and possible communications scenarios depending on the election results.

COL Liaison appointments

COL Chair Ed Garcia made the following liaison appointments for this committee year: Kate Alderete-ALA Rural, Native and Tribal libraries committee, Dr. Ursula Gorham - IFC Privacy subcommittee, Lesliediana Jones - Freedom to Read Foundation, Karen Mellor - COSLA, Lisa Pritchard - GODORT, Leah

Richardson - CoSA/NAGARA/RAAC/SAA Joint Working Group on Issues and Awareness, and Adam Webb - PLA.

COL Fall Retreat

This year the COL Retreat was held virtually over two days, 11/21 and 12/19. The committee worked with PPA staff to develop and approve the Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2025. There were also issue briefings and policy discussions with Penn Hill Group and PPA Staff about the outlook of the federal landscape in 2025. Kathryn Klossek from the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) also gave a presentation on federal legislation concerning artificial intelligence.

PPA AED Hiring Committee

COL Chair Ed Garcia has been serving on the hiring committee to hire a permanent Associate Executive Director for the Public Policy and Advocacy Office.

Free People Read Freely Summit

COL members Ed Garcia and Lesliediana Jones were members of the Steering Committee for “Free People Read Freely A National Summit on Democracy, Intellectual Freedom, and Book Censorship in the 21st Century” which took place on September 17th in Washington DC.

RESOLUTIONS

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

Representatives from the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) attended the December 19th COL meeting to discuss their proposed “Resolution in Defense of Anti-War Protestors’ Freedom of Expression and Assembly.” The Committee provided some feedback on the resolution and took no official position on the resolution. The resolution does not directly impact the work of COL or the PPA office and calls for no direction action related to federal legislation.

Tribute Resolution Honoring Alan Inouye upon his retirement from the American Library Association

COL voted to endorse the Tribute resolution honoring Alan Inouye.

LibLearnX Scheduled events

Political Outlook Session

We invite everyone to attend the PPA session happening at LLX. [Libraries On the Line: Charting a Path Beyond the 2024 Elections](#) on January 25 at 1pm, will offer insights as Congress and the Administration consider funding library programs, write and implement laws impacting your work, and federal agencies reflect the changed priorities of the new Administration, start the year prepared to make your voice heard! Arizona Congressman Raul Grijalva is the foremost library champion in the House of Representatives. As the 119th Congress kicks off, hear from top staff from Arizona Rep. Raul Grijalva’s (D-AZ) office and Committee on Legislation Chair Ed Garcia about where the opportunities lie and what challenges we can expect from the new Trump Administration and Republican House and Senate. An added attraction: hear from your Public Policy and Advocacy team about how ALA will be fighting for libraries in Washington, and across the nation and where your action can be most effective!

Committee on Legislation meeting

COL will be meeting on Sunday, January 26 at 9am. During this meeting, the MLSA Taskforce will present their final report to the committee.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY UPDATES

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

ALA opposes bill that could harm nonprofit organizations

In November 2024, ALA joined a letter [opposing H.R. 9495](#), the Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act. The bill, as passed by the House, contains provisions that if enacted could lead to increased political targeting of nonprofit organizations, such as nonprofit libraries and library organizations. As of this writing, the bill is pending for a potential Senate floor vote on final passage, which currently appears unlikely before the current Congress ends on January 3, 2025; if not passed by that date, the bill will expire.

Workforce Reauthorization bill recognizes role of libraries

The reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) in Congress offered an opportunity to expand workforce services at libraries. PPA staff worked tirelessly with Congressional staff on both sides of the aisle in both chambers in successful efforts to add library-friendly provisions in the bill. The final bi-partisan agreement included several ALA recommendations. Unfortunately, Congress was not able to get the final bill across the finish line and is expected to be brought up in the next Congress.

Senate recommends funding bump for LSTA, House bill cuts funding

While Congressional funding stalled - as expected - House and Senate appropriators provided some indication of its willingness to support library funding programs LSTA and IAL. The House spending bill called for significant cuts in IMLS and LSTA (\$26 million cut) funding while the Senate spending bill called for an increase in LSTA funding (\$3 million increase). Congress was unable to enact any spending bills and were forced to pass a temporary spending measure (a Continuing Resolution, or CR) to keep the government operating. ALA is preparing for expected cuts in library and education funding in the 119th Congress.

ALA endorses legislation to improve library districts' access to federal funding opportunities

In July 2024, ALA endorsed the [Special District Grant Accessibility Act](#) (H.R. 7525 / S. 4673). If enacted, the bill could make it easier for special districts, including library districts, to access federal funding for local governments. Nationwide, around 1,400 public library systems are organized as library districts, representing 15% of public library systems nationally. This bipartisan bill was passed by the House and approved at committee level in the Senate. As of this writing, the bill is pending for a potential Senate floor vote on final passage, which currently appears unlikely before the current Congress ends on January 3, 2025; if not passed by that date, the bill will expire.

ALA endorses Summer Meals and Early Learning Act

ALA endorsed the Summer Meals and Learning Act (S. 4876 / H.R. 9222) which authorizes \$25 million in new funding to ensure students in low-income communities would have access to meals and educational programs during the summer months.

The Summer Meals and Learning Act [Merkley-Morelle press release](#) highlighted an ALA quote: Cindy Hohl, President of the American Library Association, said: "No matter how diligent a student is during the school year, it's during the summer months that they are most at risk of losing ground in their learning. In many communities, the difference between a slip and the summer slide comes down to whether they have access to a library and nutritious food. The Summer Meals and Early Learning Act will empower school libraries to bridge the gaps between school years by nourishing both the minds and bodies of young students."

ALA encourages libraries to respond to federal survey of facility needs

Beginning in December 2024, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) is conducting a [survey on the physical conditions and facility needs of public libraries](#). GAO is sending the survey to a nationwide sample of public library outlets that were randomly selected. ALA encourages libraries that receive the survey to respond to it.

GAO is an independent federal agency that works for Congress. The purpose of the study is to make national estimates of libraries' physical conditions and facility needs, accessibility, costs and funding for maintenance and repair, and the effects of natural disasters and extreme weather. ALA advocated for the study to be undertaken and looks forward to the study's final report, which is expected in late 2025.

ALA endorses Summer for All Act

ALA endorsed the [Summer for All Act, \(S. 4843\)](#), introduced by Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) which authorizes \$4 billion in new funding for high-quality summer enrichment programs at community-based organizations such as libraries, parks and recreation departments, schools, and community centers. Funding would support kids and families unable to afford summer programming but need to be meaningfully engaged during the summer months.

DIGITAL INCLUSION & SKILLS

The Supreme Court is hearing a Universal Service Fund case in 2025

Consumers' Research has brought suits against the FCC in several appellate courts across the country, alleging that the USF contribution factor is unconstitutional. The 5th, 6th and 11th courts all agreed with the FCC and intervenors in the case and upheld the USF funding system as constitutional. However, in July, upon further review, the 5th circuit court ruled that the USF is not constitutional. Now, the case is headed to the Supreme Court, and ALA plans to go to court to defend the USF and the E-Rate program. The court granted certiorari in November, and amicus briefs, including one from ALA, will be filed in January. Oral arguments are expected at the end of March.

Learning Without Limits: The New E-Rate Hotspot Lending Program

ALA was a lead stakeholder in the hotspots program rules development. We set up meetings with key FCC staff, gathered library examples on hotspot lending, and submitted comments, reply comments, and further notice comments over the course of the year. We also launched our new Learn Without Limits webpage with hotspots and cybersecurity resources. The hotspots program was voted on and

approved at the July FCC meeting, and Wi-Fi hotspots now appear on the E-Rate Eligible Services List for FY25.

<https://www.ala.org/news/2024/07/ala-praises-fcc-vote-make-wi-fi-hotspots-eligible-e-rate-funding>

ALA coordinated with FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel’s staff for speaking engagements re: Learn Without Limits

- Connecticut Library Association in conversation with COL Chair Ed Garcia (April 2024)
- At Malden (MA) Public Library with COL member Maria McCauley and Senator Ed Markey (July 2024)
- Enoch Pratt Library with Senator Chris Van Hollen (July 2024)

ALA held a webinar - “Libraries = Learning Without Limits: The New E-Rate Hotspot Lending Program” in September in which the E-Rate program rules and promising practices for setting up and sustaining a hotspot lending program at your library were reviewed.

Training Next Generation State E-Rate Coordinators

ALA’s E-Rate Task Force with COSLA applied for and was awarded \$249,999 IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program to develop, deliver, and evaluate two multi-day in-person training events for E-Rate state coordinators. The first training was held in Nashville, TN, in November 2024.

COPYRIGHT, LICENSING & COMPETITION

Pro Codes Act

As a member of the Re:Create Copyright Coalition, ALA opposed copyright legislation that is not in the interests of the library community. In particular, ALA opposed the Pro Codes Act, <https://x.com/recreateco/status/1813576303700058264>. There was considerable effort by the Coalition at the end of the 118th Congress to prevent the attachment of adverse copyright legislation to the two big bills that were moving, the National Defense Authorization Act and continuing resolution bill.

COL SUBCOMMITTEES AND TASKFORCES

Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) Reauthorization Task Force

The Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) Taskforce, appointed by COL Chair Ed Garcia, continued its work throughout 2024. Joe Thompson was appointed to chair the Taskforce and must be applauded for his efforts over this past year. The Taskforce met with many sectors of the library community, including tribal, public, school, COSLA, and others. The Taskforce will be presenting its final report to COL at LLX. The MLSA is the authorizing legislation for LSTA and its implementing agency, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and is set to expire in 2025.

Copyright, Legislation, Education and Advocacy Network (CLEAN)

COL Chair Ed Garcia appointed two new co-chairs to lead the CLEAN subcommittee: Kathleen DeLaurenti and Jennie Rose Halpern. The new CLEAN roster with two-year appointments is Kathleen DeLaurenti (2024-2026), Jennie Rose Halpern (2024-2026), Heather Briston (2024-2026), M Allen Thomas (2023-2025), Kyle Courtney(2024-2026), Danielle Johnson(2024-2026), Sandra Aya Enimil (2024-2026), Tim Vollmer (2024-2026), Shanna Hollich (2024-2026), Arnetta Girardeau(2024-2026), Peter Shirts(2024-

2026), Kathryn Klossek (2024-2026), Deborah Doyle (COL member) (2023-2025), Jim Neal (COL member) (2024-2026).

PPA ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

PPA & COL researching 70+ newly elected members of Congress

With more than 70 newly elected members of Congress heading to Washington next year, PPA and COL are working to research these new-to-Washington officials in search of Members that might be open to supporting the legislative priorities of libraries. PPA reached out to various constituencies within ALA as part of this research with the understanding that many of these new members come from state and local governmental background and may have provided some level of support or openness to the work of librarians.

ALA hosts webinar to help library workers receive Public Service Loan Forgiveness

On October 2, 2024, ALA hosted a free webinar for library workers [about Public Service Loan Forgiveness](#) (PSLF). The webinar, presented by Public Service Promise, explained how to obtain student loan relief from the PSLF program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Education. PSLF will forgive the federal student loan balances of workers with qualifying employment history at a government or non-profit organization, such as many school, academic, public, and special libraries. ALA has advocated for years for library workers' access to PSLF, and has undertaken several outreach efforts, such as this webinar, to assist library workers in navigating the program. To date, more than 1 million public servants – including qualifying library workers - have received \$78 billion in loan forgiveness under PSLF.

ALA provides resources to promote civic participation through “Reader. Voter. Ready”

Throughout the latter half of 2024, ALA continued its “[Reader. Voter. Ready.](#)” campaign to inform and prepare library workers and supporters for the 2024 elections, and to support libraries that provide voter engagement resources and services to their communities. Key activities included:

- On August 6, 2024, ALA hosted a webinar, “[Getting our Communities to the Polls,](#)” which was facilitated by ALA President Cindy Hohl and featured the voter engagement work of public, academic, and school librarians.
- ALA's partnership with the League of Women Voters was highlighted by [Independent Sector](#), [Library Journal](#), and [Web Junction](#).
- ALA's division, the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), joined the campaign with its September 2024 release of [Inspiring Future Voters: A Booklist for Young Readers](#), which was featured in the *Washington Post*'s [Book Club newsletter](#).

ALA joined as a premier partner of [National Voter Registration Day](#) and celebrated the hundreds of libraries nationwide that participated. In addition, ALA became a partner of [National Voter Education Week](#) and [National Vote Early Day](#).

Congressional Fly In scheduled for April 2 - 3, 2025

COL Chair Ed Garcia and the PPA team will be welcoming a select group of ALA members at the annual Congressional Fly-In to be held April 2 - 3. This invite-only event is an important opportunity to advocate Congress on the value of libraries. ALA Members will be meeting with Congressional leaders and appropriations leaders just as Congress is expected to begin serious work on the FY 2026 spending bills.

PPA Hosting Policy and Action Webinar Series for Members

Following the 2024 elections, PPA began a member-only webinar series to inform members of the range of issues and actions expected to arise in 2025. The first session, “Standing Up for Libraries: 2024 Election Implications and Next Steps” was held on November 22 and was attended by hundreds of ALA members. Speakers included members of the PPA team and staff from the Penn Hill Group. The second in this series is slated for January 15 and will prepare members for the coming 119th Congressional session. COL Chair Ed Garcia will serve as emcee for the series.

OTHER PPA ACTIVITIES

ALA President-Elect Sam Helmick Visits PPA for Two-Day Briefing

In December, ALA President-Elect Sam Helmick visited the PPA office in Washington for a two-day policy briefing. Sam received in-depth discussions on ALA policy development, expectations for the coming 119th Congress as well as state and local advocacy, communications and social media guidance, and preparations for the coming year.

White House recognizes libraries’ efforts to save lives from overdose

On October 8, 2024, the White House [recognized](#) the efforts of libraries to save lives from overdose. ALA President Cindy Hohl participated in a discussion of the issue in Washington with Administration officials and national leaders. ALA is one of more than 250 organizations and businesses that have made voluntary commitments to the White House Challenge to Save Lives from Overdose, a nationwide call-to-action to stakeholders across all sectors to increase training on, and access to, life-saving opioid overdose reversal medications like naloxone. ALA - led by its division, the Public Library Association - has developed [resources](#) to help libraries respond to the overdose crisis, supported by funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Alan Inouye retirement announcement

After 18 accomplished years at ALA and an additional 10 years in broader public policy work, Alan Inouye will be retiring from ALA on February 28, 2025. Alan first joined ALA as Director, Office for Information Technology Policy in 2007 and was promoted to Senior Director of Public Policy and Government Relations in 2018. In 2022, Alan assumed the additional role as Interim Associate Executive Director, Public Policy, and Advocacy (AED, PPA), and in 2023 assumed an additional role as Interim Chief Advancement Officer.

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. Join our growing corps of champions at:

<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 Bluesky. The Public Policy & Advocacy Office has transitioned our social media presence from X/Twitter to Bluesky over the past several months; this decision was made after a significant period of diminishing returns from our

2024-2025 ALA CD#20

2025 ALA LLX Meeting

office's efforts on X, as well as after structural and cultural changes on the platform that lessened our ability to communicate effectively with members, advocates, and policy makers. [Follow PPA on Bluesky.](#)

Tribute Resolution in Honor of FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel

Whereas, Jessica Rosenworcel was designated by President Biden as the first woman to become the permanent Chair of the Federal Communications Commission in 2021;

Whereas, Chairwoman Rosenworcel worked tirelessly to close the digital divide and the homework gap, champion libraries and schools, and ensure connectivity for all through the Learn Without Limits programs, the Affordable Connectivity Program, and the Covid-era Emergency Connectivity Fund;

Whereas, Chairwoman Rosenworcel led the Commission in restoring network neutrality and advancing ideals of a free and fair internet for all;

Whereas, Chairwoman Rosenworcel promoted E-Rate access for all libraries and schools, reduced barriers for applicants, streamlined program rules, and adopted program rules to explicitly include Tribal College Libraries to receive E-Rate funding; and

Whereas, Chairwoman Rosenworcel provided keynote remarks at two ALA Annual Conferences, attended state library conferences, and visited many local libraries.

Now, therefore, be it

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

- 1) Recognizes Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel's commitment to broadband access for all communities and closing the digital divide.
- 2) Expresses our gratitude for her leadership, contributions, and public service, as well as her support and friendship to libraries.

American Library Association (ALA)

Committee on Legislation

Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2025

Federal policymakers must uphold the programs and policies that enable libraries to meet their communities' needs for digital opportunity, information access, education, learning, and skills, while protecting the intellectual freedom and civil rights of library users and workers. We will remain steadfast in defending libraries, library workers, and the freedom to read, against political threats, including any attempts to criminalize the work of librarianship.

ALA's Committee on Legislation encourages ALA members and library supporters to advocate on the following library priorities in 2025. ALA will monitor and engage on these and other [federal issues](#) that affect libraries, and will join with partners and coalitions to protect and advance libraries of all types.

To meet this moment, it is essential that ALA members and library supporters continue to stand up for libraries. Please join in supporting ALA's advocacy by [signing up for advocacy alerts](#), [joining ALA or renewing your membership](#), [donating to ALA](#), and using [ALA's advocacy resources](#) to build effective relationships with decisionmakers.

Funding and Support

[Preserving federal funding](#) for library services is essential to ensuring that every community in America has strong libraries. Key issues for 2025:

Dedicated library programs: Protect key federal agencies and programs, including:

- The Institute of Museum and Library Services, including the Library Services and Technology Act, and in reauthorizing the Museum and Library Services Act;
- The Department of Education, including Innovative Approaches to Literacy and support for [school libraries](#);
- Library facilities that are modern, accessible, energy-efficient, and resilient to extreme weather; 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: Sustain agencies and programs that support libraries' roles in:

- K-12 and early education, including in reauthorizing the Every Student Succeeds Act;
- Higher education, including reauthorizing the Higher Education Act;
- Economic and workforce development, including 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: Promote pathways to the profession and support for library workers, including through Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

IMLS Director: Ensure that any nominee to serve as the next Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services is well-qualified and will uphold the agency's crucial work.

Broadband and Digital Opportunity

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 2025:

E-rate: Protect the Universal Service Fund. Preserve E-rate as a flexible program for meeting libraries' local technology needs.

Internet access and digital opportunity: Preserve and expand resources for libraries to support Internet access and digital opportunity.

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

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 2025:

E-books and digital content: Prevent unfair and anti-competitive practices that limit libraries' ability to meet their users' reading and information needs. Preserve libraries' rights under copyright limitations and exceptions.

2024-2025 ALA CD#20

2025 ALA LLX Meeting

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

Government Information and Services

ALA supports policies that assist libraries in providing no-fee permanent public access to [government information](#) and services. Key issues for 2025:

Federal Depository Library Program: Advance the [Federal Depository Library Program](#) and update its statutory authorities.

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