

## **Six Month Report on ALA Washington Office Activities**

### **Sen. Durbin, FCC Leaders Address ALA Midwinter Meeting**

The ALA Washington Office organized a number of a well-attended sessions at the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting. Assistant Senate Minority Leader Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) discussed the implications of the November mid-term Congressional elections for America, libraries and library advocacy during the Washington Update session. Roger Goldblatt, associate bureau chief of the Federal Communications Commission's Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau, spoke at the same conference session, focusing on the Commission's new consumer education initiative and its digital literacy agenda.

In another program, library leaders, including ALA Executive Board member Jim Neal, gathered to discuss a preliminary national policy agenda as part of the ALA *Policy Revolution!* and how it relates to ALA's overall strategy. In one conference session on ebooks, an expert panel provided insights on new opportunities available to libraries now that five of the world's largest publishers provide libraries with access to their full ebook catalogs. In another session, Maura Marx, acting IMLS director, detailed the agency's priorities for the next two years, which will shape the agency's discretionary and Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States programs.

### **ALA Welcomes White House's ConnectED: Library Challenge**

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, the White House announced the launch of ConnectED: Library Challenge, a new initiative to ensure that all school students receive public library cards through their schools. The ALA Washington Office secured an opportunity for American Library Association President Courtney Young to meet with President Barack Obama immediately prior to the launch of the ConnectED: Library Challenge initiative. Young responded to the Challenge by calling on school and public library leaders to work collaboratively with school administrators and civic leaders to ensure that each and every student has a public library card. In the fall, the Institute of Museum and Library Services will convene a meeting of the national library, government and school leaders to discuss best practices for developing and implementing school-public library card programs in their local districts.

### **ALA Helps Found and Launch New Copyright Coalition Re:Create**

In late April, ALA joined almost one dozen other founding member trade and civil society organizations to launch "Re:Create: Innovators, Creators and Consumers United for Balanced Copyright." The group is a new coalition formed in anticipation of at least some, and potentially sweeping, efforts beginning in the current Congress to "reform" copyright law. Detailed information about Re:Create, its mission, objectives and positions on a broad range of issues is online at: [www.recreatecoalition.org](http://www.recreatecoalition.org).

### **District Dispatch Subscriber Count Doubles**

In the past six months, the ALA Washington Office has more than doubled the number of subscribers to the *District Dispatch*, the Office's policy blog. Since ALA Washington Office Press Officer Jazzy Wright rolled out the technical and graphic redesign of the *District Dispatch* blog and ALA Grassroots Communications Specialist Lisa Lindle began her social media work, the Office's policy blog has more than doubled from 3,000 to just under 6,100 subscribers.

**OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**ALA Issues Statement Opposing House Budget Proposal Potentially Eliminating IMLS**

knowledge and skills in the challenging academic content standards adopted by the state, and graduate from high school ready for college and careers. By definition, an effective school library program would include an adequately resourced school library staffed by a state-certified librarian. ALA submitted formal comments to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander and Ranking Member Sen. Patty Murray on their Discussion Draft of legislation to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. ALA asked librarians via legislative alerts to contact their Senators to ask that the SKILLS Act be integrated into the seminal version of the ESEA reauthorization bill written by Chairman Alexander and Sen. Murray, which would become the basis for the HELP Committee's subsequent consideration of ESEA. If the SKILLS Act is included in such a "base bill," it would send the signal that Committee leadership backs the proposal and would likely oppose any effort to strip it from the bill by later amendment.

In March, OGR conceived and orchestrated two intensive and distinct ad hoc coalition efforts to support dedicated school library funding in the reauthorization of ESEA. The first letter went to key Democratic Members of the Senate HELP Committee. ALA and AASL were joined on the first letter by eleven other leading national non-profit organizations, including the: NEA, AFT, National Superintendents Roundtable, National Alliance of Black School Educators and the National Literacy Council.

The [second letter \(pdf\)](#) was backed by more than 20 education businesses, associations and media groups, including: Scholastic Inc., EBSCO Information Services and the Association of American Publishers, Baker & Taylor, OverDrive, Booklist Publications, Bound to Stay Bound Books, DEMCO Inc. and the Junior Library Guild. Both letters call on the U.S. Congress to incorporate the SKILLS Act in ESEA reauthorization, which would expand federal investment in school libraries in order to offer students the tools they need to develop critical thinking, digital, and research skills. ALA transmitted the letters, targeted appropriately, to U.S. Senate HELP Committee Chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and HELP Committee Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA).

### **Senate HELP Committee Passes Every Child Achieves Act (ECAA), including school libraries**

The Committee marked up a reauthorization for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including much of the school library improvements ALA requested, but not all.

The bill did include many opportunities for the school libraries and librarians to be specifically included, for instance, it authorizes states to use funds to support the instructional services provided by school librarians. And Local Education Agencies (LEA) are authorized to use funds to support the instructional services provided by school librarians.

For the purposes of Teaching of Traditional American History, LEAs are required to carry out grant activities in partnership with an institution of higher education; a nonprofit history or humanities organization; or a library or museum. For the purposes of Presidential and Congressional Academies for American History and Civics, an eligible entity is defined as an institution of higher education or nonprofit educational organization; museum; library;(an)3s 0 0 -3( )-4brary



2002, Sen. Cornyn has led congressional efforts to improve the public's access to government information. In 2007, he co-sponsored the OPEN Government Act, which reformed the Freedom of Information Act and created the Office of Government Information Services (GIS). Earlier this year, Sen. Cornyn introduced the FOIA Improvement Act of 2015, which would strengthen the GIS and require that records be released unless there is foreseeable harm or a legal requirement to wit

## **ALA Testifies In Support Of Library Funding At U.S. House LHHS Hearing**

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, Emily Sheketoff, executive director of the ALA Washington Office, called on the U.S. House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies to support federal library funding at an appropriations hearing that took place in Washington, D.C. Sheketoff advocated for the House Subcommittee to include \$186.6 million for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) under the Institute of Museum and Library Services and \$25 million for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program under the Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

## **Hundreds from Every State Converge on D.C. for 41st Annual National Library Legislative Day**

In May, more than 400 library advocates met in Washington, D.C. to speak with their legislators about the importance of libraries as part of the 41<sup>st</sup> annual National Library Legislative Day. Former Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) jumpstarted the opening briefing by speaking about the importance of constituent advocacy. Additional speakers include American Library Association President Courtney Young, Patrice McDermott, director of [Openthegovernment.org](http://Openthegovernment.org) and several congressional staff experts. During the annual event [Mas'ood Cajee](#), a library advocate from Stockton, California, was awarded the 2015 White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIST) Award.

## **Media Interest in ALA's USA Freedom Activities**

In [Long Lines for Freedom](#), an op-ed published in Washington's popular "CongressBlog" in *The Hill* on National Library Legislative Day, President Young recounted librarians' long history of opposition to the bulk surveillance of Americans' phone and library records and called strongly on Congress to pass the new USA FREEDOM Act to finally end those practices.

Additionally, the cover story of the *The Nation*



Association; and the Urban Libraries Council. A planning session is scheduled for Friday at the Annual Conference.

### **Commendations on E-rate**

ALA President Courtney Young, ALA E-rate Task Force Chair Kathi Peiffer, and OITP Associate Director Marijke Visser presented Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler with the ALA Council resolution thanking him and the Commission for its efforts on behalf of libraries. The Council “Resolved, that the American Library Association, on behalf of its members: 1) extends its deepest appreciation to Chairman Wheeler for his vision for connecting America’s libraries and schools to high-capacity broadband to best serve our communities nationwide; and 2) recognizes with gratitude Chairman Wheeler and the Commission for their unflagging work throughout the 18-month E-rate Modernization proceeding.” During this period, Marijke Visser also received ALA’s Staff Achievement Award for her work on E-rate.

### **ALA Seeks Feedback on Draft National Policy Agenda for Libraries**

In January, OITP released for discussion a [draft policy agenda \(pdf\)](#) for librarians to guide a proactive policy shift. The draft agenda flows out of library values and the imperative of “opportunity for all,” as well as within a context of national political, economic and demographic trends and opportunities. The draft agenda articulates three broad themes to organize the national public policy goals of the U.S. library community: Services, People, and Institutional Issues. Outlining this key set of issues and context is being pursued through the [Policy Revolution! Initiative](#)



## **Call For Nominations: Robert L. Oakley Memorial Scholarship**

OITP is soliciting applications for the Robert L. Oakley Memorial Scholarship. Librarians interested in intellectual property, public policy and copyright have until June 1, 2015, to apply for the annual \$1,000 scholarship, which was developed by the American Library Association and the Library Copyright Alliance, and supports research and advanced study for librarians in their early-to-mid-careers.

## **“Digital Futures” Supplement to *American Libraries* Released**

The fifth supplement to *American Libraries* on digital content was issued in late May with the theme that libraries are taking the initiative in advocacy for improved library access. This report “Digital Futures” features ten articles that include national experts and leaders such as Maura Marx, James Neal, Sari Feldman, Carolyn Anthony, Micah May, Eric Hellman, and Vailey Oehlke, with OITP director Alan S. Inouye serving as guest editor. While we acknowledge the progress made in digital content matters, much disruption is on the horizon and therefore much more work for ALA remains.

## **Engaged with and Supporting the Florida and Texas Chapters**

Larra Clark and Charlie Wapner presented at the Florida Library Association Annual Conference in two sessions. Maker spaces and 3D printers were the focus of one session and information policy and the Policy Revolution! initiative were featured in the second session. Also during this period, Carrie Russell presented at the Texas Library Association Annual Conference and presented the L. Ray Patterson Copyright Award to Georgia Harper, recently retired from the University of Texas.

## **Library Broadband Speed Test Shows Increased Capacity; Room Still for Improvement**

Broadband speeds in U.S. public libraries have improved significantly in recent years yet continues to lag behind national broadband connectivity standards, according to “Broadband Quality in Public Libraries,” a new report released jointly in April by the American Library Association and the Information Policy & Access Center at the University of Maryland College Park as part of the Digital Inclusion Survey of which OITP is a partner. Libraries reported progress in their public Internet speeds—nearly half of all libraries report subscribed Internet download speeds as being greater than 10 Mbps in 2013, compared with only 18 percent of libraries four years earlier.

## **ALA, DCWG Make Strong Showing at Book Expo America**

Four representatives of ALA participated in two panel sessions and a series of publisher meetings at the 2015 Book Expo America in New York. Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels moderated one panel on library-publisher partnerships while DCWG co-chair Carolyn Anthony served on another focused on discovery. Keith and Carolyn were joined by Alan S. Inouye and Carrie Russell of OITP in meetings with Penguin Random House and a number of mid-sized publishers and industry experts.

## **Simon & Schuster Provides 5,000 Ebooks to Libraries During National Library Week**

Working with ALA, Simon & Schuster announced the distribution of 5,000 ebook copies of the Academy Award–winning producer Brian Grazer’s new book, “A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life” to libraries. In addition to the ebook distribution during National Library Week, Simon & Schuster cooperated with ALA to promote the program and the important role of libraries. Jonathan Karp,

Alan S. Inouye participated in an IMLS convening on the national digital platform held in Washington, D.C.

Carrie Russell participated in multiple meetings related to ebooks at DPLA Fest in Indianapolis, Indiana

Larra Clark and Alan S. Inouye, with Emily Sheketoff, hosted more than a dozen information policy students from the University of Maryland for an evening of discussions on policy and lobbying at the ALA Washington Office

Larra Clark participated in an Advisory Committee meeting on the future of the MLS for the Co

**Op-ed Published in *The Hill***

On May 28, Alan S. Inouye published an op-ed in *The Hill* titled “We Need a Digital Constitutional Convention.” This piece brings together a number of strands, such as the Re:Create copyright coalition, the Policy Revolution! initiative, and the NetGain initiative, as well as broad thinking about our work on copyright, net neutrality, privacy, and other areas. We anticipated further work in this vein of the integration of information policy efforts and libraries as the voice of reason in the debate.