

ALA Committee on Legislation
Report to Council
2015 Midwinter Meeting – Chicago, Illinois

Vivian Wynn
Chair, ALA Committee on Legislation
February 3, 2015

Committee on Legislation (COL) highlights:

1. **Federal Legislative Advocacy Group (FLAG):** An important new subcommittee has been added to COL. FLAG is charged with the task of creating a cadre of influential library advocates from every state in the United States. FLAG will be devising and implementing a proactive approach, enhancing our advocacy efforts to Congress. Advocates recruited by FLAG must have connections to one or more Members of Congress and agree to contact those Members of Congress when urgent legislative and policy issues arise. FLAG, with the help of the Office of Government Relations (OGR) staff, will provide talking points and background information to the cadre, which they can use to rally support among their elected officials. In the short three weeks that FLAG has been recruiting cadre members, we have been extremely successful, with a list of over fifty cadre members to date. We are asking councilors to help identify potential cadre members and to pass that information on to the FLAG chairs: Vivian Wynn (vwynn91@bellsouth.net) or Joan Reeves (jreeves2@gmail.com).
2. **New advocacy tool:** On behalf of COL's Grassroots subcommittee, consultant Stephanie Vance and her team have analyzed the challenges that often keep potential advocates from getting involved in advocacy efforts. Answers to these challenges are provided in this tool: a 40-page comprehensive document which includes a chapter

appropriations; and Lisa Lindle is our new Grassroots Communications Specialist. COL also has experienced a rebuilding, as we welcomed many new members.

4. Potential upcoming legislation COL discussed the following federal legislation that is expected to be forthcoming in the 114th Congress: network neutrality; the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA); reintroduction of the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act (FASTR); an update to the Freedom of Information Act; changes to provisions of the USA Patriot, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments and Electronic Communications Privacy Acts; and reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
(<http://www.districtdispatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Key-Library-Priorities-and-Stats-114th-Cong-REV-012115.pdf>)

Transparency

COL in the last year has made great strides in increasing the level of transparency in our work. As a committee of Council, my bi-annual reports to Council reflect the major work of COL. In addition, notes from COL's monthly phone calls are promptly posted on ALAConnect with a live link to Washington Office's blog, District Dispatch (www.districtdispatch.org) for further information. As press releases and key issues arise, they will be posted to the Council list when possible.

In addition, the ALA Office of Government Relations (OGR) submits regular reports to Council and the Executive Board. OGR also submits an implementation report to the Executive Director just prior to the Midwinter and Annual conferences. That report details what has been done with the resolutions from the previous conference. Information also is shared through the District Dispatch which is easily searchable in many ways, including by subject matter and legislation.

During COL's monthly phone calls, the OGR staff regularly report on their work with relevant coalitions, regarding developing strategies and messaging. Also covered is the extensive work with staff and elected officials on Capitol Hill, and communication with key staff at other organizations.

We would like to urge all Councilors who have not yet done so to sign up to receive District Dispatch blog posts in order to be fully informed on current legislative issues.

As always, COL would like to thank the staff of OGR for all of their hard work! The work of COL cannot happen without their help.

COL brings

members also discussed updates needed for the E-Government Toolkit and future program and pre-conference ideas.

Federal Library Advocacy Group (FLAG)

During FLAG's inaugural subcommittee meeting, e

Legislative Action Network (LAN), which pairs grassroots advocates with legislators for advocacy purposes and shared his tips on facilitating that process. The subcommittee discussed how to replicate LAN nationwide, and how it could dovetail with the work that FLAG is already doing with grassroots advocates. Holly Carroll stopped by to discuss the changes to the E-rate program and request ideas and assistance from the subcommittee in getting the word out about it to librarians so that they can take advantage of E-rate before the deadline at the end of February.

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2014-2015 ALA CD#20.1
2015 ALA Midwinter Conference

This resolution was adopted by the ALA Council on Tuesday, February 3, 2015

**Resolution on Preserving Public Access to Scientific and Technical Reports
Available Through the National Technical Information Service**

Whereas some three million scientific and technical reports are held by the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), and such reports are instrumental in promoting research, innovation, and business;

Whereas since 1940, NTIS has been cooperating with federal agencies to collect,

of surveillance and investigatory authority. In June, ALA joined more than 30 other civil liberties and privacy organizations in writing to key Members of the Senate to support the modification of the USA FREEDOM Act so that it truly ends the “bulk collection” of telephone business records, and builds transparency and additional oversight into court-approved surveillance activities.

ALA supports “CORE Act” to expand access to learning resources and school libraries

In June, ALA applauded the leadership of Senators Jack Reed (D-

Library Copyright Alliance, other associated IP coalition lobbying ongoing

OGR has continued to actively meet with and lobby both the US Copyright Office and Patent and Trademark Office at senior levels of both agencies in support of the fastest, and least legislatively complicated, ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to promote the world-wide flow of copyrighted material to the print disabled. Specifically, ALA and its coalition colleagues continue to urge both agencies, consistent with the position taken by the US delegation in Marrakesh, to recommend “clean” ratification of that agreement without proposing any changes to existing US law, particularly Section 121 of Title 17: the “Chaffee Amendment.” ALA continues to coordinate closely with major national advocacy groups for the blind and print-disabled in these efforts.

As the new Congress is set to convene, OGR also has been strategizing with potential allies in the public and private sectors in anticipation of activity on multiple Congressional fronts, including the potential introduction of “orphan works” legislation. Such proposals may well be outgrowths of the comprehensive “review” of copyright by the House Judiciary Committee, and the anticipated release early in the new year of independent reports and recommendations by both the US Patent & Trademark and Copyright Offices.

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with Congressional staff in their meeting. Recipients also were encouraged to invite their new Members to visit their local libraries, and to provide a brief report of their meetings

Rockefeller to remove his hold on S.2520 (which he later did). Although this bill did not become law, we will continue to fight the good fight next congress.

Government agency becomes more transparent

ALA has been closely monitoring the issue of a possible closure of NTIS and the progress of S.2206, the Let Me Google That For You bill in congress. On October 28th, in response to some of the concerns raised by the bill, NTIS announced that “the full text for 800,000 of [their] documents can be downloaded immediately in electronic PDF format without charge.” S.2206 died at the end of the 113th Congress, but we will continue to monitor the issue in the 114th.

Advocacy and social media update

We are happy to report that the ALA Washington Office Tumblr page has gained 200+ followers in the past month alone, bringing us to 11,635 followers total. We are also seeing an increase in response to our legislative alert emails. In November, our first alert regarding the USA Freedom Act, had an 18% click-through rate. Another legislative alert, which asked advocates to reach out to the new Members of Congress, was sent out in early December and had a 27% click through rate.