

Report to Council
2024 LibLearnX
Ed Garcia, Chair – ALA Committee on Legislation (COL)

COL Committee Members:

Ed Garcia (Chair), Kate Alderete, ~~Barbara~~ Deborah Doyle, Shauntee Burns, Lori Fisher, Dr. Ursula Gorham, Susan Hempstead, ~~Kathy~~ Lester, Dr. Maria McCauley, James G. Neal, Sherry Virginia Neal, Kent Oliver, ~~Jana~~ 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 where federal legislation has implications at the state and local level.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Government Information Subcommittee/GODORT liaison

The Committee voted to sunset the Government Information Subcommittee due to lack of activity over the past few years. An unofficial liaison has been created between the Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) and COL, to keep the committee apprised any government information issues. Lisa Pritchard has been appointed to the liaison role through 2025.

MLSA taskforce

This past August member taskforce was created with members appointed by the COL Chair with a charge: to advise the Committee on Legislation (COL) and the Public Policy and Advocacy Office (PPA) on key issues in the upcoming reauthorization of the Modern Library Services Act (MLSA), to invite input from stakeholders, and to report recommendations to COL and PPA by Annual Conference 2024. MLSA will be due for reauthorization in early 2025. Former COL Chair Joseph Thompson was appointed Chair of the taskforce. The taskforce roster has representation from COL, COSLA, types of libraries, different geographic areas and political districts. The taskforce has met twice this past fall. An initial meeting was held with staff from Senator Jack Reed's office, as he will likely be the lead sponsor of the reauthorization. COL Chair Ed Garcia attended the annual meeting of the Chief Office of State Library Agencies (COSLA) in Newport, RI on 11/1 to hold a feedback session for initial feedback from COSLA members.

COL Fall Retreat

This year the COL Retreat was held virtually over two days, 11/15 and 12/15. ALA President Emily Drabinski provided comments at the Retreat. The committee worked with PPA staff to develop and approve the Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2024. There were also issue briefings and policy discussions with Penn Hill Group, PPA Staff and the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom.

Fall Executive Board meetings

COL Chair Ed Garcia and Interim PPA Associate Executive Director Alan Inouye report to the Executive Board on October 15 about COL and PPA activities.

AASL Crystal Apple Award

At their biennial national conference, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) recognized Senator Jack Reed (RI) and Rep. Raul Grijalva (AZ) with the Crystal Apple Award for their introduction of the Right to Read Act and ongoing support for librarians. The award is given at the discretion of the AASL President to an individual or group that has had a significant impact on school libraries and students. AASL Immediate Past President and COL committee member Kathy Lester journeyed to Rhode Island to present the award to Senator Reed at the Cranston Public Library on October 30, alongside COL Chair and Cranston Public Library Director Ed Garcia. They were joined at the awards presentation by representatives of the Rhode Island Library Association, School Librarians of Rhode Island and Cranston Mayor Kenneth Hopkins. The award will be presented to Rep. Grijalva at a future date.

Council Actions

At the 2023 Annual Conference, ALA Council passed the [Resolution Condemning Discrimination Against Library Workers and Supporting the LGBTQIA+ Community](#). This resolution created a taskforce with representation from COL. COL member Kate Alderete was appointed to the taskforce and is serving as chair.

Liaisons

The following COL members were appointed by the COL Chair as liaisons:

COL Liaison to the Sustainability Committee: Susan Hempstead (2024)

COL Liaison to the IFC Privacy Subcommittee: Dittusa Gorham (2025)

ALA Liaison to the CNA/ARARAACSAA Joint Working Group: Joseph Thompson (2024)

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND POLICY UPDATES

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Libraries included in WIOA draft bill

In December, House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-VI) and Ranking Member Robert C. Bobby (D-WA) introduced [H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act](#). The bipartisan bill makes critical improvements to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that will expand the skills development provided under the law and strengthen the relationship between employers and the workforce system. The proposed legislation would add public libraries as eligible one stop operators.

ALA Invited to participate in Congressional Funding Showcase

ALA was invited to participate in a December [Congressional showcase](#) highlighting the positive impacts of federal funding on education and libraries. ALA staff met with a number of Congressional offices to expand on how this funding has allowed school, public and academic libraries to expand the range of services and resources to patrons. The event was held in the Capitol Visitors Center and hosted by the Committee for Education Funding.

ALA Endorses Introduction of Adult Education Works Act

Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) reintroduced the bipartisan Adult Education WORKS Act to strengthen and expand programs for adult learners. This important legislation would expand access and services for adult learners, improving career pathways. The bill would increase funding for adult education in public libraries and community-based organizations. ALA endorsed the [Senator Reed included a quote](#) from ALA President Emily Drabinski in his press release. Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) was also

FEDERAL INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM ISSUES

ALA Endorses Fight Book Bans Act

In December, Rep. Maxwell Frost (FL) introduced the ALA Endorsed Fight Book Bans Act aimed at combating the surge of book banning in schools. The legislation, cosponsored by Reps. Jamie Raskin (MD) and Frederica Wilson (FL), would offer school districts funding to defend against the ongoing surge in challenges to books and educational materials. [With joined](#) more than a dozen national organizations in supporting this legislation.

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

American Library Association (ALA)

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 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.