

### A farewell message from Emily Sheketoff, executive director of ALA's Washington Office

2017 has been a very different year in many ways. A new kind of president. A chaotic budget process in the U.S. Congress. My departure from ALA. Not that these conflate, but that is the world we're inhabiting.

What is not different is the dedication of library advocates. When President Trump released his "skinny budget" devoid of details in March, his proposal to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—and with it the library funding that went through the agency—was enough to set library advocates from around the country into action. Together, we convinced one-third of the entire House of Representatives, from both parties, to sign letters to the House Appropriations Committee in support of two federal library programs—the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL).

Advocates worked tirelessly in their home districts, and they came to Washington, D.C., in record numbers. National Library Legislative Day in the first week of May had 25% more participants than last year, pushing the fire marshal's limit by 10! The 530 participants in Washington, D.C., and more than 1,000 participants in Virtual Library Legislative Day, asked their senators to sign a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee requesting \$186.6 million for LSTA and to reauthorize the Museum and Library Services Act.

The same week, Congress passed an omnibus spending bill, which will fund the government through September. Congress added \$1 million to IMLS's budget—a poke in President Trump's eye.

As I write this last Washington Hotline during my last week at ALA, it is easy to

focus on library funding concerns and the many policy challenges that lay ahead: active efforts by the FCC chairman to roll back network neutrality, threats to fair balance in copyright policy, and increasing surveillance and privacy risks, to name a few.

At the same time, increasing public needs and decreasing public funding makes this a ripe moment for educating Congress on the many ways that libraries provide economic opportunity to people across the country. Right now, major corporations worth billions of dollars—publishers, data aggregators, and other companies who do business in libraries—are joining forces to advocate for federal funding for libraries.

As evidenced by House support for federal library funding, library advocates have allies in Congress. We just need to keep up our pressure for funding for libraries and information policies that serve the public interest.

I am satisfied that my 17 years at ALA have been well-spent. I have played a part in helping library patrons in this country get better library services, and that makes me feel both proud and profoundly grateful. Farewell, and keep up the fight—our communities are counting on us. ♪

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*("Academic libraries serving . . .," continues from page 337)*

4. Standby Task Force, [standbytaskforce.org](http://standbytaskforce.org).
5. Internews, [internews.org](http://internews.org).
6. United Nations, "High-level UN Event Tackles Biggest Refugee and Migration Crisis since Second World War," UN News Centre, September 30 2015, accessed March 23, 2017, [www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52074-Vs6MNJMrLUo](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52074-Vs6MNJMrLUo).
7. The 1947 Partition Archive, [www.1947partitionarchive.org](http://www.1947partitionarchive.org). ♪

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