

The lame duck session of the 115th Congress is winding down dramatically when it comes to library priorities. Both ALA members and staff in Washington are working down to the wire to pass legislation and protect policy positions.

At writing, House leadership is holding up a floor vote on the Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) to reauthorize the Institute of Museum and Library Services through 2025. As we anticipate continued threats from the current administration and even stronger competition for funding, reauthorizing the primary agency that administers federal support for libraries is increasingly important. ALA members and state librarians in strategic congressional districts are making phone calls to key House leaders and other influencers, urging them to support moving the legislation.


As ALA advocates for MLSA, we are also working hard to ward off serious threats to the U.S. Copyright Office and the Library of Congress. The lobbying efforts of influential rightsholders are gaining traction as they push for passage of the Register of Copyrights Selection and Accountability Act (S. 1010) before the end of the lame duck session. The legislation would undermine the authority of Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden and possibly lay the groundwork to move the Copyright Office out of the Library of Congress. The Library Copyright Alliance (LCA) strongly opposed the companion bill (H.R. 1695) that passed the House earlier this year. Should the legislation pass the Senate in its current form, Congress would voluntarily give up much of its power to appoint its own copyright advisor and give the president authority to fire the appointee at any time.

Partly due to the outcry from the library community, a scheduled vote on S. 1010 has been canceled twice. However, we fully expect continued efforts to pass legislation before Congress adjourns. ALA remains vigilant and continues to mobilize advocates in target states to oppose the bill as ALA staff approaches key decision makers in the Senate one by one on Capitol Hill.

As ALA continues to stand for libraries in these final days of this Congress—and prepares for the new 116th Congress—our biggest asset is the year-round advocacy of our members. It is at times like this that advocates' investments in building relationships with decision makers makes the difference.

Applications open for Oakley Memorial Copyright Scholarship through January 20

In recognition of his life accomplishments and contributions, ALA and LCA have established the Robert L. Oakley Memorial Scholarship to support research and advanced study for librarians in their early-to-mid careers who are interested and/or active in the fields that Robert Oakley was expert in: intellectual property, public policy, copyright, and their impacts on libraries and the ways libraries serve their communities. The \$1,000 scholarship to encourage and expand interest in and knowledge of these aspects of librarianship is awarded annually to an individual or a team of individuals who meet eligibility criteria. Applicants should provide a resume or curriculum vitae along with a statement of intent (maximum 2,000 words) for use of the scholarship funds.

A review committee will be made up of the members of the ALA Copyright, Legislation, Advocacy, and Education Network in discussion with LCA. Applications must be submitted via e-mail to Carrie Russell, crussell@alawash.org by January 20, 2019. 

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