

Pending Congressional issues

Intellectual property: ALA has been working hard in the House of Representatives to seek support for the Digital Copyright Era Enhancement Act, H.R. 3048. Academic and other librarians have been contacting their representatives seeking support for this landmark bill, sponsored by Representatives Rick Boucher (D-Virginia) and Tom Campbell (R-California).

There are now more than 30 cosponsors of H.R. 3048. Senators are being asked to cosponsor S.1146, a bill sponsored by Senator John Ashcroft (R-Missouri) to revise the Copyright Act to maintain the protection of intellectual property and the provision for library and other access in the electronic age.

In early April, the House Judiciary Committee voted to report out a new substitute for the WIPO Copyright Treaties Implementation Act. It includes elements of a Clinton Administration proposal, opposed by ALA, which would bar the manufacture of electronic devices needed by libraries to afford public access to encrypted information. Provisions originally in H.R. 3209 that would limit the copyright liability of online service providers were also incorporated.

For updates on the status of copyright legislation, contact Adam M. Eisgrau, legislative counsel, ALA Washington Office, (800) 941-8478; e-mail: ame@alawash.org.

Government information: The Inter-Association Working Group on Government Information Policy (IAWG) submitted a revised legislative proposal to Congress in March to revise Chapter 19 of Title 44 of the U.S. Code, the law that governs public printing, procurement, and the Federal Depository Library Program. Copies of the IAWG legislative proposal and issue briefs, as well as other information about the IAWG and its activities, are available at <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/IAWG>.

The three key goals in the proposal emphasize enhancing and strengthening public access to government information in all for-

mats. The IAWG believes that Title 44 reform must be enacted during this 105th Congress. Lee Wisel from Columbia Union College in Maryland has represented ACRL on IAWG. Dan O'Mahony from Brown University is IAWG chair and a member of ALA's Committee on Legislation. He can be reached at (401) 863-2522 or e-mail: IAWG@brown.edu for further information.

HEA reauthorization: The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee and the House Education and Workforce Committee have each ordered reports on their respective bills reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA). At this writing, report language is not available.

The House bill, H.R. 6, includes many student loan and financial aid proposals. President Clinton's High Hopes for College for American's Youth program is also included; this program would support grants to establish partnerships between colleges and middle and junior high schools in low-income communities. The House bill would consolidate a number of nonfunded teacher training programs into a single-state, block-grant program.

The Senate bill S. 1882 is similar, though it would combine teacher-education programs into two new grant programs, one that would also build partnerships between colleges and schools in low-income communities. Both House and Senate versions would forgive at least a portion of student-loan debt for students teaching for at least three years in disadvantaged communities.

The most contentious issue in both bills is a lack of budget offsets to pay for the student-loan interest rate reductions. This could cause problems in reaching agreement with the administration although it is generally believed that HEA reauthorization should pass during this Congress.

It is less clear whether Congress will be able to complete its ambitious agenda during the spring session. There is little time left in the 105th Congress; it will be interesting to see what moves forward in this election year. ■

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