

A greeting from Kathi Kromer, associate executive director, ALA Washington Office

Since joining ALA's Washington Office in June, one of my top priorities has been learning from leaders of ALA divisions and investigating the relationships each one has with the Washington Office. I have been referring to my first months at ALA as my listening tour. It has been my time to gather information and input about what you care about—to collect the insights and ideas on a wide range of policy issues from ACRL and your peers.

While federal funding for libraries has risen to the fore in past months, there have been significant developments in federal policies that call for more attention:

Network neutrality: After the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposed rolling back rules to protect network neutrality in May, more than 10 million people and organizations—including ALA and ACRL—filed comments opposing the changes. We are watching and prepared to act if legislation results and leads to actions by the FCC.

Privacy: Bipartisan legislation to modernize the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986 was introduced in the Senate (S.1657) in July. A similar House bill, though not as far-reaching, was overwhelmingly approved in February. Reconciling these bills will take time, but ALA and our coalition partners are pushing hard for adoption of this possible landmark legislation.

Government information: There may be a light at the end of the tunnel for nearly 20 years' worth of efforts to ensure taxpayers' fair access to federally funded research. In July, both House and Senate appropriators

approved language to provide public access to Congressional Research Service (CRS) reports. This development, combined with the recent re-introduction of the bipartisan Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act in the House (H.R. 3427), gets us closer than ever to free sharing and public dissemination of CRS reports.

What I have discovered so far in my first three months at the helm of the Washington Office is this: ACRL members can offer valuable insight into how these and many other issues impact access to information and intellectual innovation in particular. While the Washington Office is here to amplify your voice on policy issues, we are only as effective as our members are engaged. Without a doubt, college and research librarians are well-positioned public leaders in communities across the country. The Washington Office is counting on ACRL members to lend your viewpoints and your influence as we shape future information policy.

I look forward to working with you on those changes, learning more from you, and suggesting ways for ACRL members to act in future Washington Hotline columns. *KK*

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