

Much work left by Congress for the next session

The main accomplishment by the 106th Congress in its first session was FY2000 appropriations. But there are many other pending pieces of legislation remaining for the second session, which started in late January. Congress has only about 100 working days scheduled, another complex appropriations debate brewing, and a backdrop of a presidential election year. Selected major pending legislative issues that ALA will follow this session include:

- *Database Protection Legislation.* Two dueling bills were introduced in the first session to provide new protection for databases in addition to protection already provided under copyright law. As previously reported, the Collections of Information Antipiracy Act (H.R. 354) is a seriously flawed bill sponsored by Rep. Howard Coble (R-North Carolina). This legislation, if passed, would provide copyright-like ownership of facts. Repeated attempts to present the bill for a vote by the full House were postponed thanks in part to academic librarians and their supporters. ALA supported an alternative bill, the Consumer Investor Access to Information Act (H.R. 1858), sponsored by Rep. Tom Bliley (R-Virginia). Both bills have been reported out of their respective committees; continued attempts to move to floor action are expected this session.

- *ESEA Reauthorization.* Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is important to all types of libraries, especially school libraries. Several bills were reported out of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, including the Dollars to the Classroom Act (H.R. 2) and the Academic Improvement for All Students Act (H.R. 2300) were passed by the House as part of the reauthorization package, but no Senate action occurred before the end of session.

Sen. Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) and Rep. Major Owens (D-New York) introduced the Elementary and Secondary School Library and

Media Resources, Training and Advanced Technology Act in the Senate and the House (S. 1262, H.R. 3222).

The bills would provide up-to-date school library media resources and well-trained, professional certified school library media specialists for elementary schools and secondary schools. There has been no hearing on the House bill.

- *Filtering and Blocking Requirements.* Several attempts were made to require public libraries and K-12 schools to install filtering or blocking software on their computers. Sen. John McCain (R-Arizona) introduced the Children's Internet Protection Act (S. 97), which would mandate the use of technology to block or filter Internet access.

The Senate Commerce Committee completed action on S. 97 (Rept. 106-141), and the GOP High Tech Task Force has listed this as one of their top priorities for passage early next session.

Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pennsylvania) introduced S. 1545, Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act. The bill would require schools and libraries receiving e-rate discounts to install blocking or filtering systems or implement Internet-use policies. The bill would also require a study of available Internet-blocking or filtering software. The bill is seen as a reasonable alternative to the more restrictive S. 97 by McCain.

- *NTIS Closing.* In August 1999 the U.S. Department of Commerce announced its intention to close the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) and transfer its functions to the Library of Congress (LC). Although hearings were held, the draft bill prepared by the Commerce Department has not been officially introduced. Alternatives about how to continue to manage the various NTIS functions include transferring the functions to the Government Printing Office or a "hybrid" solution with GPO, LC, and NARA accepting a mix of the functions.

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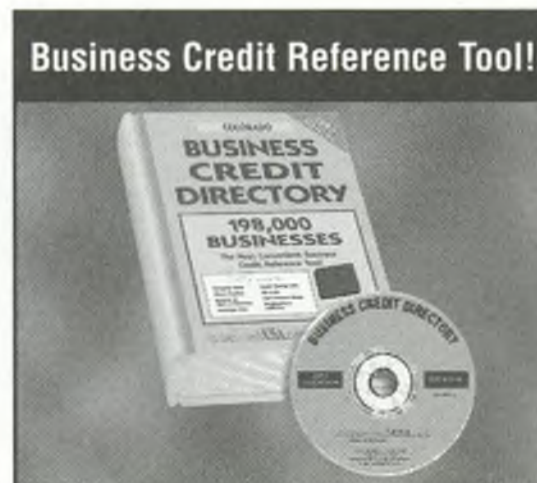
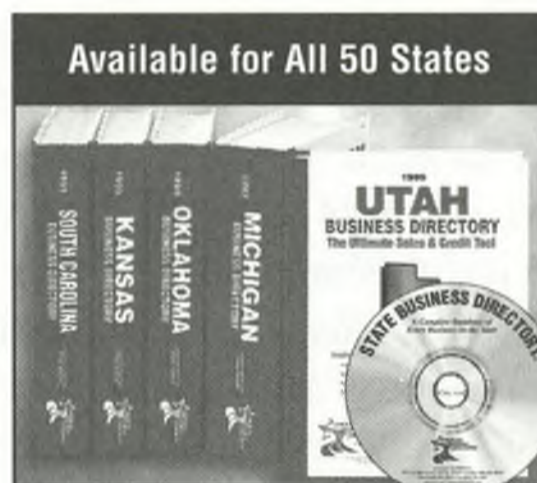
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