

## **Appropriations**

When Congress left for the August recess only five of the thirteen appropriations bills were close to finalization. FY2002 funding bills for Energy, Interior, Legislative Branch, Transportation, and VA/HUD passed both the House and Senate and are ready for conference between the two bodies. Almost all of them are set somewhat higher than the President's request. It appears that President Bush is reluctant to consider the Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill and the Defense appropriations bill as the last two bills of the session.

There are only 17 to 18 legislative days scheduled before October 1, the start of the new fiscal year. Hints of continuing resolutions have been floated with plans to set funding at last year's level for however long the resolutions continue. While that is a record-keeping nightmare for federal agencies, it would be one way of cutting funding without a recession. Another way would be to pass all the bills and then reduce them all by a percentage level to reach budgetary compliance. Since many states are suffering from revenue shortfalls, the pressure will build from states to increase education funding, a big-ticket state issue, to cover the short falls.

## **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)**

ALA is asking for FY2002 funding to be increased to \$350 million, which would allow states to offer many more important library programs. Library supporters should ask Representatives and Senators to fully fund LSTA and support reauthorization when it comes up for renewal next year. For further information check the ALA Web site at <http://www.ala.org/washoff/lsta.html>.

## **Database and distance education**

The parties on both sides of the debate over database protection continued to negotiate into early August under the sponsorship of

the House Judiciary Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Following a break, discussions are expected to resume at the end of August, but as for now, no draft bill has emerged. For further information see <http://www.ala.org/washoff/database.html>.

A distance education bill, S. 487 (the TEACH Act) passed the Senate in June. The House has taken up the same bill, which was passed by the House Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property in early July. Although the bill has not yet been taken up by the full House Judiciary Committee, it is anticipated that the committee will indeed approve the bill after the August recess and will send it on for a vote on the House floor. For further information see <http://www.ala.org/washoff/disted.html>.

## **UCITA**

Two of the national legal groups concerned with UCITA (Uniform Computer Information Transaction Act) have taken actions this summer that offer both threats and challenges for the library community and other UCITA opponents.

The American Bar Association (ABA) established a task force to review UCITA following a failed attempt at the ABA meeting in August to pass a resolution opposing the act in its present form and returning it to NCCUSL for extensive redrafting.

National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) is the chief creator of model UCITA legislation. For now, NCCUSL has agreed to stand down from pursuing passage of UCITA, though other proponents are not restrained from legislative activity. NCCUSL has scheduled an open meeting of its UCITA standby drafting committee for Nov. 16-18 and has requested that the libraries and other opponents submit amendments.

ALA is working with the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) to prepare for this meeting. For ongoing and often changing information about UCITA go to <http://www.ala.org/washoff/ucita/index.html>. ■

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