

### IMLS and NCLIS testify

On February 28, Robert Martin, director of the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), testified before the House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee on the FY2003 Administration's budget request. Martin lauded the increased funding request of \$181.7 million for library programs and \$29 million for museums, and highlighted the \$10 million initiative announced by Laura Bush to stimulate and support education for new librarians. He said statistics show there will soon be a large drop in the number of practicing librarians because of retirement. He also mentioned the need for more library professionals to teach in graduate library programs.

Martin said IMLS was refocusing the operation support for museums. He said 85 percent of museums are meeting standards, but IMLS can only fund 19 percent of applications for grants. In answer to questions from Rep. Ralph Regula (D-OH) about technology affecting the role of museum and library professions, Martin said that technology dramatically enhances the reach of museums and libraries, acting as a billboard. He said technology has not replaced the traditional services, but that all have increased. Regula said he would like to see more programs like the community library in his district that has set up a reading room for seniors who are mentoring children from the elementary school next door.

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) next testified on the FY2003 budget. Commission Chair Martha Gould was introduced by Representative James Gibbons, (R-NV), who claimed her as a longstanding friend and his librarian. Gould said that the stated rationale for zeroing out the NCLIS account was totally unsubstantiated.

She thanked Regula for funding the Literacy Through School Libraries program and cited the NCLIS hearing on school libraries held in Cincinnati, Ohio, last spring as con-

vincing NCLIS to support the legislation. Also testifying was Commissioner Jack Hightower, who discussed the role of libraries in the community and an NCLIS project that focuses on the importance of libraries as disseminators of community information in times of crisis.

### **Eldred v. Ashcroft—U.S. Supreme Court decides to hear appeal**

The Supreme Court announced on February 19 that it has granted the petition for certiorari filed last fall in a case challenging the constitutionality of the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act. The appeal asked the court to agree to hear (and to overturn) a decision by the federal appeals court for the D. C. Circuit. In February 2001, in a 2-1 decision, that court rejected the argument that the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act is unconstitutional, holding that retroactive term extensions are within Congress' authority under the Copyright Clause, and that the 20-year term extensions did not violate the First Amendment. The act extends copyright protection for an additional 20 years (for an ordinary work, that term is now "life of the author" plus 70 years).


On December 13, 2001, ALA, American Association of Law Libraries, Association of Research Libraries, Digital Future Coalition, Medical Library Association, and Society of American Archivists filed an *amici curiae* (friend of the court) brief in support of the request that the U.S. Supreme Court exercise its discretion to take the case. Visit <http://www.ala.org/washoff/eldred.html> for more information.

The case will present a great opportunity for libraries to explain our view on the importance of the public domain and the harm that flows from keeping works almost perpetually locked up. *Amicus curiae* briefs in support of Eric Eldred, the plaintiff who is challenging the law, will have to be filed by April 5. The oral argument before the Supreme Court will not take place until next fall. More about the case can be found at <http://eon.law.harvard.edu/openlaw/eldredvashcroft/>. ■

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