

LSTA passes!

Tremendous thanks are due to academic librarians who called their congressional leaders on behalf of the Library Service and Technology Act (LSTA). On September 30, Congress gave final approval to H.R. 4278, the omnibus funding measure putting LSTA on the law books for six years and providing fiscal year 1997 funding for library and education programs and numerous government agencies. The president signed the measure the same evening. This fiscal year \$136 million has been agreed upon for LSCA and HEA II library programs, \$8 million more than Congress was originally expected to approve. The total includes \$7.5 million for HEA II library fellowship/training activities (\$2.5M) and research and demonstration projects (\$5M).

The new LSTA is of special interest to college and research libraries. Four percent of any funds appropriated are to be set aside for national leadership activities—competitive grants or contracts for library education and training, research and demonstrations, preservation and digitization, and model joint library/museum projects. The majority of the funds were allocated to state library agencies for statewide services and subgrants; any use of funds for eligible technological innovation or outreach services may involve public, school, academic, research, or special libraries.

Drastic changes proposed to FDLP

In September, House Oversight Committee chair Bill Thomas (R-CA) introduced H.R. 4280, the Government Printing Reform Act of 1996, a major revision of the sections of Title 44, *United States Code*, applying to government printing, procurement, dissemination of government publications, and the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). The bill would also replace the Joint Committees on Printing and the Library with a Joint Committee on Information.

ALA and the Government Documents Round Table are evaluating the 68-page bill for its

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potential impact on the FDLP and public access to government information. Title V of H.R. 4280 would make drastic changes to Chapter 19, the law that governs the FDLP partnership that has provided no-fee public access to government information through a nationwide system of nearly 1,400 libraries. Other provisions in the bill would affect distribution of publications, including the *U.S.*

Congressional Serial Set, to depository libraries.

Some of the highlights of H.R. 4280 as proposed would:

- Strike from the law the statutory authority for designation of depository libraries by senators and representatives and by statute. Language in the bill could be interpreted to intend that libraries designated before January 1997 could continue as depositories.

- Eliminate (apparently) the statutory authority for a congressional appropriation to fund the distribution of publications to depository libraries that are requisitioned through GPO. It is not clear whether this would also eliminate the appropriation for staff and other support for the program.

- Give the Superintendent of Documents (SuDoc) permission to obtain government publications from "issuing components," including the dissemination and republication of government publications, with the costs to be borne by the federal government entity involved. No mechanism for securing payment is provided.

- Eliminate statutory language requiring permanent retention of government publications by some depositories. Instead of getting permission from regional libraries to dispose of publications after five years, selected depositories could dispose of them only in accordance with regulations established by SuDoc and approved by the Joint Committee on Information.

To find H.R. 4280 on the Web, connect to either GPO Access <www.gpo.gov/> or Thomas <thomas.loc.gov/>. Users without Internet connection can go to one of many depository libraries offering public access workstations able to connect to GPO Access. ■

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