

Library advocates tell legislators to protect library funding

More than 350 librarians and library supporters from across the country converged in Washington, D.C., May 7–8, 2013, to meet with members of Congress to discuss key library issues during the ALA's 39th annual National Library Legislative Day. The event focused on supporting federal funding for national libraries. Advocates discussed the need to fund the Library Services and Technology Act, support legislation that gives people who use libraries access to federally funded scholarly journal articles, and continue funding that provides school libraries with needed funds for materials.

Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-Nebraska) received the 2013 Public Service Award for his support of libraries during the National Library Legislative Day. The event also included a virtual advocacy component for library supporters who could not attend the Washington meetings—advocates worked remotely to connect with legislators via phone calls, e-mails, and social media platforms.

Senator Jack Reed introduces Workforce Investments Through Local Libraries Act

In May, Senator Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) introduced legislation to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that will integrate public libraries into state and local workforce investment boards. Senator Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi) cosponsored the bill. The bill, the Workforce Investments through Local Libraries (WILL) Act, would expand libraries' opportunities to take leading roles in helping the public find

employment in this weak economy. The WILL Act would support library efforts that provide job search support in communities all across America.

Additionally, the bill recognizes public libraries as allowable "One-Stop" partners and authorizes new demonstration and pilot projects to establish employment resources in public libraries. This will allow library users access to workforce activities and information related to training services and employment opportunities, including but not limited to résumé development, job bank Web searches, literacy services, and workshops on career information.

ALA highlights library and community impacts from Broadband Technology Opportunities Program in new report

In May, ALA'S Office for Information Technology Policy released "U.S. Public Libraries and Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)," a new report that details U.S. library engagement with the federal program.

The report is the first to highlight state and local library BTOP projects nationwide and the improvements they have made to public access technology resources, digital literacy, and workforce development. Library projects in 29 states and the District of Columbia are featured in the report.

ALA estimates about 20 percent of U.S. public libraries have benefited from BTOP funding. Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) awarded just more than \$4 billion to 233 BTOP projects. NTIA established BTOP to increase broadband access and adoption nationwide, and U.S. state and public libraries have been critical partners in this effort. ¶¶

Jazzy Wright is the press officer of the ALA Washington Office, e-mail: jwright@alawash.org