

TO: ALA Council

DATE: June 5, 2026

UPDATED: June 27, 2026

RE: (select one)

☒ ACTION REQUESTED

☐ INFORMATION

☒ REPORT

Report to Council

2026 ALA Annual Council Meeting

Susan Hempstead, Chair – ALA Committee on Legislation

COL Committee members: Susan Hempstead (Chair), Kate Alderete, Colleen Baille, Glen Benedict, Dr. Nicole Cooke, Sara Dallas, Deborah Doyle, Sonya Durney, Tyler Hahn, Libby Holtmann, Lesliediana Jones, Katherine Lester, Dr. Maria McCauley, Karen Mellor, James Neal, Laura Belle Nelson, Dolsy Smith, Brad Warren, Adam Webb, Kathleen McEvoy (UFL Liaison), and Jennie Rose Halperin.

COL Charge

The ALA Council Committee on Legislation (COL) is charged with the responsibility for the association's legislative agenda. Specifically, to:

- Identify, for the Public Policy & Advocacy Office, the association's strategic priorities.
- Recommend, annually, based on consultation with the Public Policy & Advocacy Office, a legislative and public policy agenda.
- Review and advise on any policy statements and/or resolutions that have an impact on federal legislation, policy, or regulations.

- Provide a forum within ALA to share information and legislative analysis of current and impending federal laws and regulations to keep ALA units apprised of current issues affecting libraries.
- Be available to consult, collaborate and offer assistance to state and local library entities when federal legislation has implications at the state and local level.

Legislative Agenda

At the Fall COL retreat in November and December 2025, pursuant to the committee's charge, COL discussed and approved the Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2026 (attached to this report). The agenda is focused on five key areas: Funding and Support; Library Workers and Institutions; Broadband and Digital Opportunity; Copyright, Licensing and Competition; and Government Information and Services. The agenda also affirms, "We will remain steadfast in defending libraries, library workers, and the freedom to read, against political threats, including any attempts to criminalize the work of librarianship."

COL Report Items for 2026 (first six months)

ALA Activity

- This year saw the return of the [ALA 2026 National Library Legislative Day \(NLLD\)](#), which has not occurred since 2018. Library advocates gathered on the Hill in Washing to make their voices heard and urge support for our country's libraries in Congress. Nearly 200 library advocates from across the country showed up in Washington to hear from policy leaders who prepared them for 234 meetings with Members of Congress.
- Nearly two dozen Members of Congress celebrated National Library Week through floor statements and postings on social media. ALA PPA shared NLW talking points with many offices ahead of time.
- [Take Action for Libraries Day](#) was held during National Library Week on Thursday, April 23, when advocates pressed congressmembers to oppose censorship legislation like H.R. 7661.
- ALA staff in Washington, D.C., hosted President elect Maria McCauley for a two-day orientation to PPA work. The agenda included a dinner attended by ALA member leaders and local figures, including Acting Librarian of Congress Robert Newlen and ALA Councilor Janice Welburn.

- ALA participates in [ASAE Community Impact Coalition](#) which is committed to ensuring lawmakers understand the value of 501(c) organizations and advocating against proposals that would eliminate their tax-exempt status. The Community Impact Coalition is supported by a wide range of trade associations, charities, and professional societies.
- ALA participates in Leadership Conference Center for Civil Rights and Technology 2026 Convening: [“All Eyes on Tech: Power, Protection, and the Fights for Civils Rights in the Age of AI.”](#)
- [Maria McCauley speaks at panel](#) with Senator Markey and Executive Director of MIT Media Lab and former FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel on 30 Years of E-Rate at the MIT Media Lab
- ALA participates in [TED Democracy LIVE](#) (Lisa/Jon)
- [PPA staff visited National Library Service](#) for the Blind & Print Disabled for a tour of their facilities and a discussion of policy issues.
- [ALA celebrated Public Service Recognition Week](#)

Education

- ALA filed comments with Department of Education (ED) on [proposed professional degree categories](#) eligible for higher federal loan limits (Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) Proposed Rule) calling for Library Science to be included in list of “professional degree” fields. ED rejected ALA arguments and we continue to work with allies in Congress and organizations to repeal the final rule. ALA would support a Congressional Review Act in Congress to repeal the rule.
- ALA joins 97 organizations on letter supporting funding and continued administration for [Institute of Education Sciences](#) (IES). This arm of the U.S. Department of Education provides research, statistics and evaluation of K-12 programs including the work of school libraries.
- ALA joins [National Coalition for Literacy Hill Day](#) in May supporting funding and programs for adult and family literacy targeted for significant cuts in President’s budget.
- ALA sounds alarm as Department of Education ([ED](#)) [Programs are disbursed to other agencies](#). ALA statement posted at end of 2025.
- ALA announced support for Senator Andy Kim (D-NJ) introduction of [S. 4028 Open Books, Open Doors Act](#) aimed at addressing book deserts and breaking down barriers to reading for millions of children.

- ALA endorsed the reintroduction of [Right to Read Act \(S. 3365/H.R. 6440\)](#) to authorize investment in school library programs, ensure protections for school librarians, and support family literacy programs. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) Introduced the Senate bill while Rep. Adelita Grijalva (D-AZ) introduced the House companion continuing the work so long led by her late father, Rep. Raul Grijalva.

Appropriations

- ALA leads cultural alliance on [letter to Congress](#) calling for strong FY 2027 funding levels for IMLS, LSTA and other programs.
- [Final FY 2026 spending includes plus up for LSTA, level for IAL](#)
- [FY 2027 Dear Appropriator Letters](#) campaign again a success. House LSTA letter finished with 134 signatures while the Senate letter garnered 42. The House IAL letter ended up with 77 signatures and the Senate 32.
- As expected, the [President budget request to Congress would eliminate IMLS, IAL](#) funding for FY 2027. This is just the first of many steps towards finishing up 12 spending bills.
- ALA submits comments to the House and Senate LHHS Appropriations Subcommittees calling for strong funding for LSTA, IAL
- ALA joins 532 organization on [FY 2027 appropriations letter](#) led by the Committee for Education Funding
- ALA signs [AAM museum community wide letter](#) urging funding for museums and cultural institutions
- ALA notifies school library community on availability of [\\$16.8 million in grants for Innovative Approaches to Literacy](#). Grant applications are due June 9.

Broadband

- ALA [signs letter](#) to U.S. House of Representatives expressing support for federal programs that secure school and library district networks from cyberattacks and protect personnel data (5/18)
- [Comments of the American Library Association and SHLB](#) to the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) regarding the operations and management of USAC (5/15)
- [Endorsed Digital Opportunity Foundation Act of 2026](#) (5/19)
- ALA [press release](#) on the FCC's new E-Rate competitive bidding portal
- [FAQ on the E-Rate Bidding Portal and Simplification](#)

- ALA joined an [amicus brief](#) in support of plaintiff in NDIA v. Trump on the Digital Equity Act Competitive Grant Program
- ALA [signs letter](#) to Senate and House Appropriations leaders urging them to preserve funding for the Digital Equity Act
- ALA & SHLB host [Webinar: Defending USF After SCOTUS](#)
- [Coalition Letter](#) to U.S. Senate Commerce Committee regarding attacks on the E-Rate program
- [ALA Amicus Brief](#) filed with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in support of intervenor SHLB
- [Coalition Letter](#) to U.S. Senate Commerce Committee regarding the recent hearing titled “Liability or Deniability? Platform Power as Section 230 Turns 30.”
- [ALA and ARL oppose repealing of Section 230](#)
- ALA signs [letter highlighting value of technology for kids](#) prior to Senate hearing
- ALA [statement delivered to NTIA on the use of BEAD non-deployment funds](#)

Other Issues

- [IMLS Litigation](#), [ALA & AFSCME statement](#) on Trump Administration withdrawing appeal to lower court ruling which prohibited Administration from dismantling IMLS.
- [ALA signs GSA grant changes letter](#)
- [American Library Association: Advocating for the Best Path Forward; Expanding Access, Empowering Communities, and Driving Economic Opportunity](#) (*Business View Magazine*)

Copyright and Licensing

- ALA signs [coalition letter](#) on H.R. 6028, the Legislative Branch Agencies Clarification Act expressing concern over proposal to reorganize Library of Congress and remove copyright system from LOC.
- [PLA et al. statement on ebook pricing](#) calling for change in licensing for digital content.

Intellectual Freedom

- Provided talking points to legislators to oppose [H.R. 7661 book banning bill](#), [ALA statement](#), and sent out action alert to advocates to oppose this bill.
- Provided talking points to legislators to oppose [H.R. 2616, the “Stopping Indoctrination and Protecting Kids Act”](#) (Amelia/Sarah)
- ALA endorses H.R.7691 - [Fight Book Bans Act](#) which would provide federal funds to schools fighting book bans.

Government Information & Services

- ALA active on [Passport Issue](#), supporting legislation to restore nonprofit libraries ability to provide passport acceptance services.
- Voter registration bills (Gavin)
 - In February 2026, ALA expressed concern about proposed bills that could make it harder for libraries to help Americans register to vote. Under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, several states have designated libraries as voter registration agencies, which expand convenient access to voter registration services. Unfortunately, proposed bills (including H.R. 22, H.R. 7296, H.R. 7300, S. 128, and S.1383) would make it harder for these libraries to carry out their state-designated responsibilities by imposing an unfunded mandate on those libraries.

Civic Engagement

- [Registration is open for National Voter Registration Day](#), ALA is a Premier Partner
- USA’s 250th anniversary: PPA organized a program at PLA Conference 2026 and published an article in *Public Libraries* magazine

Library Facilities

- [GAO study of library facilities](#) (end of 2025); [summary of findings](#)
- ALA endorsed [Rebuild America’s Schools Act](#)
- ALA endorsed [RESTORE Third Spaces Act](#) that would establish a \$200 million federal pilot grant program to rebuild and improve public third spaces-public places outside home and work.

Prison Libraries

- [S. 4320 Prison Libraries Act, ALA statement](#)
- [S. 4319 Rehabilitation Through Reading Act, H.R. 8325 Rehabilitation Through Reading Act](#)
- [H.R. 7247 Prison Libraries Act](#)

Upcoming Programs at ALA Annual Conference

- June 25, 1:00pm: [Faith for Libraries Bootcamp: How Faith Communities and Library Workers Can Advocate for the Freedom to Read](#)
- June 26, 2:30 pm: [Digital Inclusion Working Group Meeting](#)
- June 27, 2:30 pm: [“Partnering for Democracy: Strategic Collaboration to Deliver Civic Information and Facilitate Voter Participation”](#)
- June 27, 1:00 pm: [“Further Together: A Collaborative Approach to Achieving Digital Equity for All”](#)

Submitted by

Susan Hempstead

Chair, Committee on Legislation

Adopted 2025-12-03

American Library Association (ALA)

Committee on Legislation

Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2026

Federal policymakers must uphold the programs and policies that enable libraries to meet their communities' needs for information, learning, skills, and opportunity. We will remain steadfast in defending libraries, library workers, and the freedom to read against political threats.

ALA's Committee on Legislation encourages ALA members and library supporters to advocate on the following library priorities in 2026. ALA will monitor and engage on these and other federal issues to protect and advance libraries of all types.

To meet this moment, it is essential that ALA members and library supporters continue to Show Up For Our Libraries. Please join in supporting ALA's advocacy by signing up for advocacy alerts, joining ALA or renewing your membership, donating to ALA, and using ALA's advocacy resources to build effective relationships with decisionmakers.

Funding and Support

Preserving federal funding for library services is essential to ensuring that every community in America has strong libraries. Key issues for 2026:

Dedicated library programs: Protect key federal agencies and programs, including:

- The Institute of Museum and Library Services, including the Library Services and Technology Act, and in reauthorizing the Museum and Library Services Act;
- The Department of Education, including Innovative Approaches to Literacy and support for school libraries;
- Support for library facilities that are modern, accessible, resilient, and efficient; and
- National library programs, including the Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, and the Federal Depository Library Program.

Library-eligible programs: Sustain agencies and programs that support libraries' roles in:

- K-12 and early education, including in reauthorizing the Every Student Succeeds Act;
- Higher education, including in reauthorizing the Higher Education Act;

- Economic and workforce development, including in reauthorizing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; and
- Other crucial community services, including through the National Endowment for the Humanities, Community Development Block Grants, and other applicable programs.

Federal leadership: Ensure that any nominee to lead the Library of Congress or the Institute of Museum and Library Services is well-qualified and will uphold the agency's crucial work. **Adopted 2025-12-03**

Library Workers and Institutions

ALA defends libraries and librarianship against threats including censorship or deprofessionalization. Key issues for 2026 include:

Pathways to library careers: Protect pathways to the profession, including Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

Broadband and Digital Opportunity

Libraries in all parts of the country must be able to serve their users with fast and affordable broadband, technology access, and digital skills training. Key issues for 2026:

E-Rate: Safeguard the Universal Service Fund and the E-Rate program. Advocate for a sustainable, predictable, and long-term funding solution. Preserve E-Rate as a flexible program for meeting libraries' local technology needs.

Internet access and digital opportunity: Preserve and expand resources for libraries to support internet access and digital opportunity.

Content access and liability: Protect individual freedom and secure open networks. Preserve liability protections for libraries, including Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.

Copyright, Licensing, and Competition

Libraries rely on balanced and flexible copyright policy to enable vital library services. ALA supports a modern copyright system with effective user rights and limitations and exceptions to copyright. Additionally, libraries rely on fair licenses and market practices in order to provide access to digital content such as e-books. Key issues for 2026:

E-books and digital content: Prevent unfair and anti-competitive practices that limit libraries' ability to meet their users' reading and information needs. Preserve libraries' rights under copyright limitations and exceptions.

Copyright Office: Maintain the Librarian of Congress' authority to oversee the Copyright Office.

Government Information and Services

ALA supports policies that assist libraries in providing no-fee permanent public access to government information and services. Key issues for 2026:

Federal Depository Library Program: Advance the Federal Depository Library Program and update its statutory authorities.

Public access to research: Ensure public access to publicly-funded research and data.

RESOLUTION FOR COUNCIL:

Resolution on Library Infrastructure as Essential Economic and Civic Infrastructure

Sponsor: Mover: Sam Helmick

Seconders: Kestrel Ward, Councilor-at-Large

COL Reviewed June 26, 2026

Endorsers:

Shanna Hollich, GNCRT Councilor

Sarah Schroeder, SC Chapter Councilor

Conrado Saldivar, Councilor-at-Large

Jennifer Brown, Councilor-at-Large

Candice Wing-Yee Mack, CA Chapter Councilor

Kristin Lansdown, Councilor-at-Large

Levi Fleming, Core Division Councilor

Matthew Kovar, Nebraska Chapter Councilor

Gail Tobin, Councilor-at-Large

Aaron M. Wilson, Councilor-at-Large

Resolution on Library Infrastructure as Essential Economic and Civic Infrastructure

Whereas, libraries serve as essential civic and economic infrastructure in communities across the United States and its territories, providing access to information, broadband connectivity, workforce development resources, entrepreneurship support, small business assistance, cultural engagement, emergency services, civic participation, and public discourse;

Whereas, libraries increasingly function as multipurpose public infrastructure, serving as community anchors, voting locations, technology hubs, cooling and warming centers, disaster response sites, workforce training centers, and incubators for lifelong learning and economic opportunity;

Whereas, libraries play a documented role in supporting local and regional economies by enabling job seekers, supporting small business formation, providing access to technology and training, and offering no-cost spaces and resources that reduce barriers to entrepreneurship;

Whereas, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, in the December 2025 report *Public Libraries: Many Buildings Are Reported to Be in Poor Condition, with Increasing Deferred Maintenance* (GAO-26-107262), found that an estimated 38 percent of public libraries report at least one building system in poor condition and approximately 70 percent report deferred maintenance backlogs, with many expecting those backlogs to persist or increase over time;

Whereas, deferred maintenance and inadequate facilities directly constrain libraries' capacity to deliver workforce development services, digital skills training, small business programming, and community-based economic development activities;

Whereas, approximately 7,000 public libraries report at least one physical barrier that limits accessibility for individuals with disabilities, restricting equitable participation in education, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities;

Whereas, libraries in rural communities, tribal communities, territories, and areas with high rates of poverty often face the greatest challenges in securing capital funding for facility repair, modernization, accessibility improvements, and technology infrastructure;

Whereas, disparities in library facilities, staffing, and resources further compound inequities in educational attainment, workforce readiness, and long-term economic mobility for children and families in underserved communities;

Whereas, public libraries form a continuous public learning and workforce ecosystem that supports early literacy, academic achievement, digital literacy, job readiness, entrepreneurship, and informed civic and economic participation;

Whereas, safe, accessible, resilient, and well-maintained library facilities are foundational infrastructure for local economic development, enabling libraries to serve as trusted, no-cost platforms for innovation, workforce advancement, and small business growth;

Therefore, be it resolved that the American Library Association:

Recognizes public libraries as essential economic and civic infrastructure that directly contributes to workforce development, entrepreneurship, small business formation, and community resilience;

Affirms that investment in library facilities, including maintenance, modernization, accessibility improvements, broadband capacity, energy efficiency, and capital construction, constitutes investment in local and national economic development infrastructure;

Urges federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to prioritize sustained and equitable investment in public library and facilities as part of broader workforce development, small business, and infrastructure funding strategies;

Encourages alignment of library infrastructure funding with economic development programs, including those supporting entrepreneurship, workforce training, digital inclusion, and community revitalization;

Supports expanded and coordinated public funding opportunities that enable libraries to serve as hubs for economic mobility, including through small business support services, job training programs, and technology access;

Encourages collaboration among public libraries, policymakers, economic development agencies, workforce boards, architects, planners, researchers, and community stakeholders to develop integrated approaches to library infrastructure as economic development infrastructure;

Requests the Committee on Legislation and Committee on Library Advocacy to continue their work with the appropriate ALA Offices and federal elected officials and staff to advance awareness of library infrastructure as economic infrastructure, to support efforts that strengthen public investment in these facilities nationwide, and advance the ALA

Legislative Agenda for funding of Library facilities that are modern, accessible, energy-efficient, and resilient to extreme weather.