

WASHINGTON HOTLINE



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Last month ACRL officers and members in some of the key states represented by legislators on congressional education subcommittees received through ACRL an urgent memo from ACRL Legislation Committee chair Nancy Kranich and myself urging letters to Congress on HEA reauthorization. The November C&RL NEWS had an article by ACRL past president Sharon Rogers on communicating with Congress, with tips on writing and lists of key legislators. The November 6 CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION on pp. 13-15 profiled the Senate education panel, explained the powerful role of congressional staff, and noted the intense pressure in the Senate to keep the HEA price tag low.

The timing of these items is not a coincidence. It's a critical time in the HEA reauthorization process. YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW IN WRITING LETTERS TO CONGRESS ON HEA LIBRARY PROGRAMS.

In the House: On November 6 House Postsecondary Education Subcommittee Chairman William Ford (D-MI) introduced HR 3700, a 612-page 5-year extension and amendment of the Higher Education Act. Title II of HR 3700 follows, for the most part, the ALA recommendations developed by ACRL.

Changes from current law in HR 3700 include:

- 1) Authorizes \$12.5 million for II-A college library resources to needy academic libraries. Grants of between \$2,000 and \$10,000 to libraries ranking below the norm in their institutional class when scored for both "materials expenditures/FTE student" and "volumes held/FTE student." Limited funding would cause fewer, not smaller, grants to the most needy.
- 2) Authorizes \$5 million for II-B library training and research.
- 3) Authorizes \$12.5 million for II-C Strengthening Research Library Resources program. Permits institutions that do not otherwise qualify to provide additional documentation to demonstrate national or international significance for scholarly research of the collection described in the grant proposal.
- 4) Deletes II-D national periodical system and substitutes II-D College Library Technology and Cooperation Grants.
- 5) Authorizes \$1 million under HEA VI International Education Programs for acquisition of foreign periodicals.

HR 3700 represents the best the library community can achieve in HEA extension, and deserves strong support. The bill could face cuts on the House floor, in conference with a Senate bill, or to assure the President's signature.

In the Senate: The Senate education subcommittee is developing a bill to be introduced before the end of the year. It may include only what is currently funded for library programs--perhaps no II-A, no II-D, no growth room for II-B or II-C.

Action needed: Write to your Senator on the Senate Education, Arts & Humanities Subcommittee in support of the ALA recommendations. Urge your Representative to support HR 3700 and show how it will help your library and users.