

WASHINGTON HOTLINE



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National Agricultural Library. Among the agenda items for Legislative Day library supporters visiting congressional offices on April was the budget request of the National Agricultural Library. A last-minute error in the FY 1989 agriculture funding bill signed by the President last fall gave NAL \$1 million less than the \$14,268,000 agreed to by Congress. This unintended 8% cut threatened NAL networking development with land-grant institutions and various information center activities. John Beecher, Director of Libraries, North Dakota State University, testified on behalf of the U.S. Agricultural Information Network before the House funding subcommittee on the NAL budget on April 12, and ALA submitted a statement for the hearing record. Fortunately, a supplemental funding bill (HR 2072) pending in the House corrects the error, although letters to Appropriations Committee members in support of NAL's request for \$14,947,000 for FY 1990 would still be timely, along with thanks for restoring the FY 1989 funds and why they are important.

LSCA. Congress must reauthorize the expiring Library Services and Construction Act this year. A joint House-Senate hearing was held on LSCA on April 11, with good attendance from many Legislative Day participants. College and research libraries have a stake in this process for several reasons. First, the current LSCA III for interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing, administered through state library agencies, stimulates multitype cooperation across local and state boundaries.

Second, there is interest in adding a preservation component to LSCA. Rep. Pat Williams (D-MT) and Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-RI), the Chairmen of the House and Senate education subcommittees in charge of extending or amending LSCA, are both keenly interested in the brittle books problem. Both are chief sponsors of measures (H.J.Res. 226 and S.J.Res. 57) to establish a national policy to promote the use of permanent papers. Both are looking at whether additional attention to preservation through LSCA could complement the recently increased federal assistance through the National Endowment for the Humanities. Testimony at the LSCA hearing by ALA President F. William Summers and by California State Librarian Gary Strong for the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies recommended an increase in authorized levels of funding for LSCA III plus the creation of a III-B preservation program in which each state would receive at least \$100,000 to address preservation needs in cooperation with all types of libraries, archives, historical societies, and scholarly organizations.

Third, the Administration's proposed legislation, the "Library Services Improvement Act of 1989," would, if enacted, repeal and replace both LSCA and the Higher Education Act title II library programs. No funds would be targeted to college or research libraries, or for fellowships for library education. The proposal would authorize \$15 million for discretionary grants for library resource sharing. Academic libraries would be eligible, but would have to compete with all other public or private organizations, agencies, institutions, and Indian tribes, for the sole purpose of developing new or expanding existing interstate library networks. The proposed research and assessment title would authorize \$1.2 million for evaluation of federal programs, directed research and development, and field-initiated research. Department of Education witnesses summarized the proposal at the April 11 hearing, and questions from subcommittee members indicated some skepticism. No member of Congress has introduced the proposal as of this writing.