

Federal funding for libraries: We need your help

The House of Representatives is set to consider this month the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005. As you know, this bill contains funding for several library programs, including the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) programs at the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The appropriations bill includes an overall funding level of \$219.9 million for LSTA programs, an increase of \$21.7 million over fiscal year 2004. As a result, the State Grants program could receive \$169.9 million and the Librarians for the 21st Century program would receive \$23 million, a \$3 million increase.

For the Improving Literacy through School Libraries program, the Appropriations Committee recommended that the program be funded at \$19.8 million, the same level as FY 2004. At this level, the Department of Education would only be able to fund around 200 awards for the approximately 3,000 eligible local education agencies.

Given the large increase LSTA receives in the bill, there may also be an attempt by some Members of Congress during floor debate on this legislation to take money from LSTA and use it to pay for increases in other programs that have been cut or eliminated.

LSTA and the Improving Literacy through School Libraries programs provide critical funding for libraries of all kinds nationwide. Only by including at least \$220 million for LSTA and \$100 million for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill will we ensure

that library patrons of all ages have sufficient access to library and information services, support recruiting and educating the next generation of librarians, and provide libraries the resources they need to improve literacy skills and academic achievement.

Action needed

Please contact your Member of Congress and ask him or her to maintain the almost \$220 million currently included in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill for LSTA programs, while increasing the amount of funding for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program for FY 2005 to \$100 million so that every state would receive funding.

Visit the ALA Washington Office Web site for more information and talking points on these and other critical programs at www.ala.org/ala/washoff/WOissues/washfunding/funding.htm. ■

ACRL offering online copyright seminar November 15–December 4, 2004

ACRL will be offering a new online seminar, Copyright issues and the academic library, November 15–December 4, 2004.

Carrie Russell from ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy will walk participants through the major copyright issues facing academic librarians today. Topics covered will include electronic reserves, interlibrary loan, using media in courseware, and campus copyright policies.

Registration opens October 18. Registration discounts are available for ACRL and ALA members. Visit the ACRL Web site for complete information, www.acrl.org/e-learning.

Bernadette Murphy is communications specialist at ALA's Washington Office, e-mail: bmurphy@alawash.org