

### Libraries get proposed funding increase for 2007

On February 6, President Bush released a \$2.7 trillion FY 2007 budget request that eliminates 141 programs but increases federal funding for libraries.

The president's budget requests \$262,240,000 for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), an increase of \$15,096,000 or 6.1 percent over FY 2006. For the Library Services and Technology Act, the budget includes \$220,855,000, an increase of \$10,258,000 over FY 2006. The LSTA number includes an increase in the Grants to States program, bringing funding for that program to \$171.5 million. ALA has actively supported an increase in Grants to States funding as this funding level will allow full implementation of a 2003 law to provide a more equitable distribution of state formula grants.

In addition, the budget includes a request for \$30 million to revitalize the consistently underfunded Washington, D.C. public library system.

The budget also includes a proposal to move the public library section of the Library Statistics Program from the National Center for Education Statistics at the Department of Education to IMLS by 2008. By moving the program, which collects and analyzes data about America's public libraries, to IMLS, the government can more easily apply these statistics and adapt policy to changing trends in library services and use. This proposal will strengthen federal library policy efforts by centralizing library activities in one primary agency.

Even though the president cut his request for Reading First funding, the Improving Literacy through School Libraries program, within Reading First, was level-funded.

The Budget request includes \$25 million for First Lady Laura Bush's Twenty-First Century Librarian Program, a \$1.24 million increase over 2006.

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### PATRIOT compromise reached

On February 9, four Republican Senators—John Sununu (NH), Lisa Murkowski (AK), Chuck Hagel (NE), and Larry Craig (ID)—who had joined in the threat to filibuster the House Conference Report on the Reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act, announced that they had negotiated a compromise deal with the White House. It appears that leadership now will be able to garner enough votes to ensure passage of the legislation in the Senate.

The proposed compromise lacks necessary strengthening of the standards for obtaining a Section 215 order and does not provide the recipient of a Section 215 court order meaningful opportunity to challenge the order or the attached gag order in a court of law.

The proposed compromise includes these changes:

- Added language asserting the ability of a recipient to challenge the gag order attached to a Section 215 order. But the gag will remain in place if a judge rules that disclosure "may endanger the national security of the U.S., interfere with a criminal, counterterrorism, or counterintelligence investigation, interfere with diplomatic relations, or endanger the life of physical safety of any person."

- Removal of the requirement that a recipient of a National Security Letter (NSL) inform the FBI of the identity of an attorney to whom disclosure was made.

- Added language asserting that libraries, when functioning in their traditional roles (including providing Internet access), are not subject to NSLs. However, the language states that libraries are subject if the services they provide fall under a particular definition defined in a federal statute. As the FBI has repeatedly asserted that all libraries that provide Internet access come under this particular definition, it is very unclear whether this change provides any real protection to libraries.

ALA continues to call on Congress to pass the SAFE Act, which would help cure many of the problems that are left unfixed in this new proposal. ❧