

### **Presidential Contender Sen. Jim Webb, FCC leaders address ALA Annual Conference**

During this year's 2014 ALA Annual Conference, former Virginia Senator Jim Webb discussed the upcoming national election season and the ways that the elections will affect libraries and library funding. During the conference, the Washington Office secured a video from Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission Tom Wheeler.

In the video, the chairman speaks about the changing nature of libraries today, emphasizing the importance of providing access to digital resources, technology, and free public Wi-Fi. Finally, Gigi Sohn, special counsel for External Affairs to Wheeler, met with Public Library Association leadership, representatives from the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the Association for Rural and Small Libraries, the OITP Advisory Committee, and the ALA E-rate task force to discuss e-rate details and the nature of library services in today's and tomorrow's libraries.

### **Workforce bill finally passes**

In July, President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, a law that will open access to federal funding support to public libraries for effective job training and job search programs. ALA President Courtney Young applauded the presidential signing of the bill in a statement. ALA thanks Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and Representative Rush Holt (D-NJ) for their efforts to include libraries in the legislation.

### **Nearly 100 percent of libraries offer tech training and workforce programs, study finds**

According to a new ALA study, nearly 100

percent of America's public libraries offer workforce development training programs, online job resources, and technology skills training.

Overall, libraries report technology improvements—including nearly ubiquitous public Wi-Fi, growing mobile resources, and a leap in e-book access—but ALA's 2014 Digital Inclusion Survey also documents digital differences among states and an urban/rural divide.

The Digital Inclusion Survey is managed by the ALA Office of Research and Statistics; the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy is a partner of the research project.

### **ALA welcomes forward movement on e-rate modernization**

In July, the FCC voted to release the first Order as part of its e-rate modernization proceeding. "This Order represents a solid first step toward increasing library participation in the E-rate program and moving our communities toward the gigabit speeds increasingly needed to support Wi-Fi, digital learning and multimedia collections," said ALA President Courtney Young in a statement.

### **Over-filtering in schools and libraries harms education, new ALA report finds**

Schools and libraries nationwide are routinely filtering Internet content far more than what the Children's Internet Protection Act requires, according to "Fencing Out Knowledge: Impacts of the Children's Internet Protection Act 10 Years Later," a report released by the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy and the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom.

"Fencing Out Knowledge" is based on a year-long study that included a two-day symposium during the Summer of 2013 and other research. *WZ*

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Jazzy Wright is press officer of the ALA Washington Office, e-mail: [jwright@alawash.org](mailto:jwright@alawash.org)