

ALAWON: American Library Association Washington Office Newsline

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In This Issue: MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES ACT ON ITS WAY TO THE PRESIDENT-
THANKS TO ALL

On September 16, H.R. 13, reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act passed the House in its final version and will be on its way to the President for signature. The legislation reauthorizes the Museum and Library Services Act to the year 2009; increases the base amount of the formula distribution to states in LSTA, sets the authorization level for library programs for FY 2004 at \$232 million, and creates an evaluation process.

The ALA Washington Office would like to thank all the library supporters who worked so hard to accomplish the passage of this legislation--the members of the Library Services and Technology Act Coalition, that met for several years to develop legislation and plan strategy; the members of the Library Business Alliance; past and present ALA presidents; members of ALA Executive Boards, librarians who testified at House and Senate hearings, Lucille Thomas (Brooklyn Public Library), David Macksam (Cranston Public Library) and Linda Yoder (Nappanee Public Library); Chief Officers of State Library Agencies; the Institute of Museum and Library Services; members of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS); the American Association of Museums; attendees at the last three years' National Library Legislative Day meetings that carried the message to Congress; members of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services Task Force (WHCLIST); members of the library community, school, academic and public libraries; library trustees and friends of libraries; and the many House and Senate members and their staffs that worked so diligently to ensure final passage.

URGENT ACTION NEEDED ON APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE

On September 10, the Senate passed the FY2004 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. Since the House passed its version (H.R. 2660, H. Report 108-188), on June 10, the bills will now go to a conference committee made up of House and Senate members. The Senate has appointed the following members to the conference committee:

Senators: Arlen Specter (R-PA); Thad Cochran (R-MS); Judd Gregg (R-NH); Larry Craig (R-ID); Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX); Ted Stevens (R-AK); Mike DeWine (R-OH); Richard Shelby (R-AL); Pete Domenici (R-NM); Tom Harkin (D-IA); Ernest Hollings (D-SC); Daniel Inouye (D-HI); Harry Reid (D-NV); Herbert Kohl (D-WI); Patty Murray (D-WA); Mary Landrieu (D-LA); Robert Byrd (D-WV).

House conferees have yet to be named.

The House bill sets a higher level of appropriations for library state grants in LSTA at \$169.6 million, and for the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program in ESEA at \$27.5 million, the President's requested level. Previous ALAWONs described the amendment offered by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and others that would have increased the Senate level of funding for both programs. The amendment failed to pass, but Senator Reed is circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter to conferees to ask for the House level for the school library program, and for the House level for the library state grants plus an additional \$1.6 million to fulfill the formula change in the newly passed Museum and Library Services Act described above. (See ALAWON of September 16, v. 12, #83 for letter text. www.ala.org/washoff/alawon). Please call your Senators and ask them to sign on to Senator Reed's letter to Senate conferees. If your Senator is one of the conferees ask him or her directly to push for the increased funds for library programs. The Capitol switchboard number is (202) 224-3121. ALAWON (ISSN 1069-7799) is a free, irregular publication of the American Library Association Washington Office. All materials subject to copyright by the American Library Association may be reprinted or redistributed for noncommercial purposes with appropriate credits.

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ALA Washington Office, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 403, Washington, D.C. 20004-1701; phone: 202.628.8410 or 800.941.8478 toll-free; fax: 202.628.8419; e-mail: alawash@alawash.org; Web site: <http://www.ala.org/washoff>. Executive Director: Emily Sheketoff. Office of Government Relations: Lynne Bradley, Director; Camille Bowman, Mary Costabile, Don Essex, Patrice McDermott and Miriam Nisbet. Office for Information Technology Policy: Rick Weingarten, Director; Kathy Mitchell, Carrie Russell. ALAWON Editor: Bernadette Murphy.