

There are only around 30 legislative days left to the second session of this 106th Congress. With the July 4 recess, timeout for the political party conventions, and Labor Day recess, there is little time to get much work done between now and October, when the Congress wants to go home to campaign. This kind of legislative session requires an "end game" strategy, needing library advocates to stay informed of the important legislation and maintain constant grassroots pressure on their representatives and senators to support library positions.

Appropriations

The main work that Congress *must* complete is FY2001 Appropriations. At this writing, library supporters are waiting for floor votes in the House of Representatives on the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, H.R. 4577—which contains the main library funding for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The Senate version is bill S. 2553.

ALA and other library advocates have been fighting for LSTA funding at the full level requested by the Clinton Administration: \$173 million. This compares with the House level of \$168 million and the Senate level of \$170 million. A filtering amendment, which would require that blocking and filtering software be installed in libraries and schools, to use federal funding for computer-related activities, is still pending. In previous efforts, this amendment, sponsored by Rep. Ernest Istook (R-Oklahoma), has been removed but in this contentious election year, it is unknown whether the library community and others will succeed at cutting this out of the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill.

The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and other funding at the Government Printing Office were targeted for severe cuts by the House Appropriations Committee earlier this spring. The House bill, H.R. 4516, proposes a cut of 25% to GPO, which translates into a 62% cut to the FDLP by eliminating most printing functions at GPO. This would require

the FDLP program to become exclusively electronic. The proposed House cuts would also eliminate the regular printing of compilations to the U.S. Code. This is just one example of important access to government information that would be lost to the American public, unless they can pay private sources or have full electronic access. The legislative branch appropriations also cover the Library of Congress, the Government Accounting Office, and other congressional agencies and expenses.

The Senate Appropriations Committee was far more reasonable. The committee voted unanimously on S. 2603 to support level funding for all legislative branch agencies. Level funding for GPO would still cause serious cuts in several areas, which is why supporters have been pressing for passage of the Senate proposal.

Database legislation

With Congress involved with these and several other appropriations bills that must be passed before Congress can go *sine die* or into final recess in October, there is less opportunity for votes on other issues, such as the dueling database bills. ALA and its allies have supported the "good" database bill, H.R. 1858, which is more reasonable and balanced in its approach to providing additional protections to databases in the electronic environment. The "bad" database bill, H.R. 354, is overbroad and problematic for the library community. Academic librarians have been especially helpful in seeking support for the preferred bill and arguing against the offensive bill.

Check the ALA Web site for legislative updates on these and other issues at: <http://www.ala.org/washoff/>.

At this site, readers can find the latest reports from the online newsletter, ALAWON, issue briefs, and other information posted about all of these issues. You can also find a link to the online ALA Legislative Action Center, which helps advocates send personalized printed or electronic letters to their respective senators and congressional representatives by providing sample letters and messages and a zip-code link to identify congressional offices. ■