

Tuition-free community college advances in House

Tuition-free community college, a key part of President Biden's campaign platform, took a step towards reality on September 8 with the release of the House Education and Labor Committee's budget reconciliation bill. Included in the nearly 300-page bill is a provision that would provide two years of tuition-free community college for eligible students. Supporters of the initiative aim to encourage more students to enroll in community college and then transfer to a four-year college.

Under the House Committee bill, the five-year program would take effect in the 2023–24 academic year, sunseting after five years. States would receive grants covering 100 percent of tuition costs for all enrolled students. Federal grants would decline in award year 2027–28 to cover 80 percent of student costs, with states contributing the difference. The Committee proposal ensures the benefit would extend to historically Black colleges and universities, tribal colleges, and other minority-serving institutions. The legislation would provide “such sums as may be necessary.”

While the program would not provide funding directly for community college libraries, any increase in student enrollment would likely encourage community colleges to increase support for academic services, including libraries. Librarians and library advocates need to make this point with administrators: libraries are pleased to provide services to more students—especially those from challenged backgrounds—but more work necessitates more resources for the library.

The House Education and Labor Committee was expected to approve its bill by mid-September, with possible consideration in the full House by September 30. ALA will continue

to follow proposals in the House and Senate as a final spending bill winds its way through Congress and to the president.


ALA accepts nominations for Copyright Award, October 31 deadline

The ALA Public Policy and Advocacy Office is accepting nominations for the L. Ray Patterson Award. Established in 2002, the honor recognizes individuals or groups who “embody the spirit of the U.S. Copyright law as voiced by the framers of our Constitution: to advance the knowledge of science and useful arts” (U.S. Constitution, art 1, sec 8). Nominations will be accepted through October 31, 2021.

The award is named after L. Ray Patterson, a key legal figure who explained and justified the importance of the public domain and fair use. He helped articulate that copyright law was negatively shifting from its original purpose and overly favoring rights of copyright holders. His book, *The Nature of Copyright: A Law of Users' Rights*, is the definitive book on the constitutional underpinnings of copyright and the critical importance of the public domain.

Appropriate nominees for the Patterson Award are persons or groups who have made significant and consistent contributions in the areas of academia, law, politics, public policy, libraries, or library education to the pursuit of copyright principles.

Nomination letters should include illustrative examples of how the nominee has contributed to the pursuit of the fundamental tenets of copyright law. Nominees who have worked or collaborated with libraries will be given special consideration.

Send letters of nomination outlining a candidate's qualifications for this award to Alan Inouye, senior director, Public Policy and Government Relations, by email at ainouye@alawash.org. 

Kevin Maher is ALA's deputy director of government relations, email: kmaher@alawash.org