

ALA active on surveillance and privacy issues

ALA continues to work closely and aggressively in tandem with partners in several coalitions to reform the multiple statutes that provide the government with various forms of surveillance and investigatory authority. Over the summer, ALA joined more than 30 other civil liberties and privacy organizations in writing to key Members of the Senate to support the modification of the USA FREEDOM Act so that it truly ends the “bulk collection” of telephone business records, and builds transparency and additional oversight into court-approved surveillance activities.

ALA welcomes open Internet bill

In June, 2013–14 ALA President Barbara Strippling applauded the introduction the Online Competition and Consumer Choice Act of 2014. Introduced by Representative Doris Matsui (D-California), the net neutrality bill would prohibit Internet service providers from giving preferential treatment to the traffic of online content, applications, services, or devices. Strippling is rallying librarians to support the legislation. On July 9, 2014, ALA, along with several education groups, such as ARL, ACRL, APLU, EDUCAUSE, and COSLA, revealed a set of guiding net neutrality principles that protect an Open Internet and support free public access and communities of students, researchers, and independent learners.

Presidential contender addresses

ALA Annual Conference


During this year’s ALA Annual Conference, former Virginia Senator Jim Webb detailed the upcoming national election season and the ways that libraries and library funding will be affected. Called a “potential presidential candidate” by *The Washington Post*, Webb has been a combat Marine, a counsel in Congress,

an assistant secretary of defense and Secretary of the Navy, an Emmy-award winning journalist, an accomplished filmmaker, and an author of ten books.

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 yearlong study that included a two-day symposium during the summer of 2013 and other research. Read the report at www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org/offices/files/content/oitp/publications/issuebriefs/cipa_report.pdf.

ALA collaborates with Senator Byron Dorgan to publish op-ed in *Roll Call*

“America doesn’t move ahead by leaving some behind,” former Senator Byron Dorgan wrote in an article published in June in *Roll Call*, where he made the case that the Federal Communications Commission should bolster its support for high-speed Internet infrastructure development in rural American communities. In the article, Dorgan advocated for increased support for E-rate, the program that helps schools and libraries obtain affordable vital Internet access and advanced telecommunications services. The op-ed was developed under the rubric of ALA’s Policy Revolution! initiative, a national public policy agenda and action plan for U.S. libraries supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Read the op-ed at www.rollcall.com/news/fcc_should_focus_broadband_internet_improvements_on_rural_communities-233767-1.html?pg=2&dczone=opinion. 

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