

Washington Office news: Higher Education Act reauthorized

In this report we will touch on the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). Other legislation important to academic libraries, passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton, include the copyright treaty bill and the copyright term extension bill. This intellectual property legislation and other issues, such as access to government information, will be covered in subsequent *C&RL News* reports. (Also refer to ALAWON, a free, irregular electronic publication of the ALA Washington Office. To subscribe, send the message: subscribe ala-wo [your_firstname] [your_lastname] to listproc@ala.org. Or, visit the ALA Web site at <http://www.alawash.org>.)

On October 7, Clinton signed a five-year reauthorization of the HEA. The areas of the HEA of special interest to academic libraries include student financial aid and work study, teacher training, and international education.

The new HEA establishes interest rates at 7.46 percent for student loans (standard ten-year repay cycle) for school year 1999–2000, down from a rate of 8.23 percent earlier this year. Pell grants for low-income students were raised to \$5,800 per academic year, up from the present level of \$3,000. Pell grant students should also find it easier to work without losing their benefits. Some of the guidelines for work-study students were adjusted, although local impact will be determined on an individual campus basis.

The HEA consolidates a number of teacher education programs into state block grants, authorizing them at \$300 million for FY99. Another provision focuses on forgiving up to \$5,000 in student loans for new teachers who agree to teach in schools in low-income communities for five years. The HEA also provides for some experimentation with distance learning programs.

A new Technological Innovation and Cooperation Program to replace the old Section 607, Foreign Periodicals Program, is one of

several recommendations from the Coalition for International Education (CIE) (of which ALA is a member) included in HEA Title VI. The interest of ACRL members helped maintain this section. Special appreciation is due Rep. Donald Payne (D-New Jersey) and his staff, who shepherd the Section 606 language through the legislative maze.

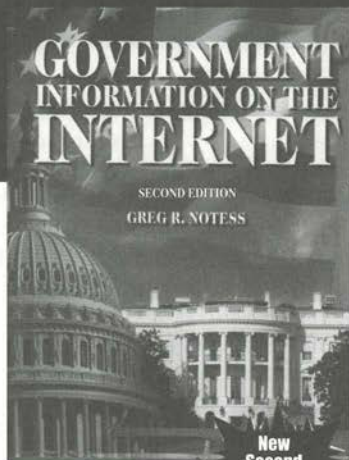
According to CIE, this will "stimulate Title VI grant recipients, libraries and other institutions of higher education to engage in collaborative projects utilizing innovative applications of information technology, thereby expanding Title VI's reach and effectiveness. Projects would collect, preserve and provide broad access to critically needed and expensive resource and instructional materials on world regions and foreign languages."

Libraries are also referenced under a section on "planning for the development and expansion of programs in undergraduate international studies and foreign languages in support of teaching, research, curriculum development, faculty training in the United States or abroad, and other related activities."

One phrase in Section 602 on National Resource Centers for international education relates to "... Grants to Maintain Library Collections ... as determined by the Secretary." It provides that the Secretary (of Education) may determine what international education centers have important library collections that might receive some funding through this program.

Meanwhile, colleges and universities will be allowed to release student information on any student who has admitted to or been found guilty of committing a violent crime or a non-violent sexual offense. Institutions will also be allowed to report to parents if students under 21 have violated laws relating to use or possession of alcohol and drugs.

Watch for notices from the U.S. Department of Education in the *Congressional Record* and elsewhere about implementation issues and proceedings regarding the above programs. The next battle on the HEA will be to make sure that all authorized funding for each title of the HEA is fully appropriated in the next Congress. ■



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