

### National Library Legislative Day 2008

On May 13 and 14, more than 400 librarians and library supporters converged on Washington, D.C., for the 34th annual National Library Legislative Day (NLLD). They came from as far away as Hawaii and from every library discipline you can think of, to lobby their Members of Congress on such issues as copyright, telecommunications, and funding. "Vote for Libraries!" was the message of the day and the enthusiastic crowd set out to bring that message to their Senators and Representatives.

NLLD is actually a two-day event. The first day is called Briefing Day, which is designed to bring participants up to speed on the wide variety of federal issues that are important to libraries. Attendees spent this year's Briefing Day in the Liaison Capitol Hill hotel, where they were treated to speakers from the ALA Washington Office, the Center for National Security Studies, the lobbying firm of Van Scoyoc Associates, and several ALA consultants. The guest speaker was Nancy Tate, executive director of the League of Women of the United States and the League of Women Voters Education Fund.

The day after Briefing Day was National Library Legislative Day itself. Attendees gathered together by state and visited as many of their legislators as the day allowed. Armed with the information from Briefing Day, a half-dozen Issue Briefs prepared by the ALA Washington Office, and state-specific materials and testimonials, the library advocates were well-equipped to talk shop with Congressional Members and staffers.

NLLD events came to a close with the annual reception, an end-of-day soiree with food and drinks, where attendees swapped stories and mingled with Members of Congress. This year's reception attracted several members, including Sens. Jack Reed (Rhode Island) and Mike Enzi (Wyoming) and Rep.

Chris Van Hollen (Maryland). The reception took place in the Caucus Room in the Russell Senate Office Building, the oldest and one of the largest assembly rooms built for the Senate outside the Capitol.

Those who couldn't make it to Washington, D.C., but still wanted to communicate the needs of libraries to Capitol Hill participated in Virtual Library Legislative Day, during which library supporters all over the country e-mailed, called, and faxed their Members of Congress. This year, 604 unique activists sent 1,817 messages to their legislators.

2008 also marked a significant first for Virtual Library Legislative Day, as the event made its way into the online environment Second Life.

### ALA/WHCLIST Legislative Day Award presented

At the Briefing Day events, Frances E. Wielin was honored with the ALA/White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce (ALA/WHCLIST) National Library Legislative Day Award. Wielin received \$300 to help pay for her trip to Legislative Day.

Wielin has been an active library supporter for more than a decade, having volunteered more than 3,000 hours at her local library, and simultaneously serving on her local library community Board of Directors for eight years. She is now a trustee in the Palos Verdes (California) Library District, where she continuously demonstrates a long-term commitment to public libraries on the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

### Rep. Vernon Ehlers given FOLUSA Award at Legislative Day Reception

At the annual reception that brings Legislative Day events to a close, Friends of Libraries USA (FOLUSA) Executive Director Sally Reed presented Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-Michigan) with the FOLUSA Public Service Award, an award that honors a legislator who has been especially supportive of libraries. Ehlers is one of the sponsors of the SKILLS Act. ♪

---

Andy Bridges is communications director at ALA's Washington Office, e-mail: [abridges@alawash.org](mailto:abridges@alawash.org)