

Gearing up for the next Congress and administration

While the 114th U.S. Congress has been in session for only three weeks since July 15, ALA's Washington Office has been ramping up work in preparation for the next Congress and presidential administration.

As a part of our national policy advocacy under the rubric of the Policy Revolution! Initiative, the Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) provided input to the major party platform committees, who articulate a party's formal set of value statements and goals. Informed by the National Policy Agenda for Libraries, the broad message was that U.S. libraries—120,000 strong—represent a robust national infrastructure that advance numerous goals in the major party platforms. Among other things, the input highlighted the role of libraries in preserving and promoting a free and open society through our involvement in information policy issues, including broadband, copyright, privacy, and access to government information.

Having registered written input to party platforms, OITP staff represented ALA at both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions to gather information about the policy positions of the respective campaigns with respect to the array of issues that relate to libraries. As a result, background research has been initiated to culminate in the writing of a number of three-pagers to be released over the next three months on topics ranging from education to copyright to entrepreneurship to big data.

In addition, several public and private events will be held in Washington in the

late fall and early winter to engage with influential players in the national policy arena after the election, during the transition and during the initial days and months of the new administration and Congress. One such event will convene national library leaders from the Library of Congress, Institute of Museum and Library Services, and other organizations to discuss strategies to move forward the library community's agenda in light of election outcomes.

Meanwhile, the Washington Office is supporting ALA President Julie Todaro's new campaign, the 45-115 ALA Federal Initiative. Working closely with the transition teams of both presidential candidates and the policy arms of both parties in the Senate and the House, the campaign will highlight and strengthen library community efforts to communicate how libraries advance national priorities.

Like the presidential transition teams, ALA's Office for Government Relations in Washington is also conducting an in-depth analysis of the federal agencies and working to identify candidates from the library community to recommend for the presidential transition teams and positions in the new administration.

On the state and local levels, materials are being developed to help librarians communicate and connect with newly elected officials by requesting meetings with them and submitting our materials to relevant staffers. Suggestions and input from members anywhere across the country are welcome (email them to Shawnda Hines, press officer, at shines@alawash.org).

Mark your calendar for a presidential inauguration viewing party to be co-hosted by the Office for Information Technology Policy and Julie Todaro at the 2017 ALA Midwinter Meeting on Friday morning, January 20. *ZZ*

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