KEY LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY POSITIONS:
A GUIDE FOR NEW MEMBERS OF THE 114th CONGRESS

APPROPRIATIONS – Maintain level funding for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) in the FY 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. LSTA resources help target library services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to people with limited literacy skills.

COPYRIGHT – Protect the many provisions of the Copyright Act that expressly allow the use of copyrighted information without prior authorization by the copyright holder, including particularly the “Fair Use” doctrine (17 U.S.C. §107). ALA is committed to equally respecting the rights of authors and to assuring that overly restrictive copyright laws do not thwart the clear Constitutional intent of the Framers that copyright is meant “To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts....”

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION – Pass the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act (FASTR). FASTR will accelerate scientific discovery and fuel innovation by making articles reporting on publicly-funded scientific research freely accessible online for anyone to read and build upon. ALA is strongly committed to no-fee access to all government-funded information and to robust support for all federal libraries and archives.

PRIVACY & SURVEILLANCE – Restore the Constitutional privacy rights of library users and all Americans lost since “9-11” to overbroad, invasive and insufficiently “checked and balanced” provisions of the: USA Patriot, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act Amendments, and Electronic Communications Privacy Acts. For decades, librarians have defended the public’s Fourth Amendment privacy rights against government attempts to obtain patrons’ borrowing (and later internet surfing) records without a warrant. Today, ALA works with and through a broad coalition of major public interest, bipartisan think tanks, and private sector companies to achieve both liberty and security, without sacrificing one to the other.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES – Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and require that every student have access to an “effective school library program,” which is defined in statute to require that: every school library be staffed by a certified librarian; equipped with up-to-date materials and technology; and enriched by a curriculum jointly developed by a grantee school’s librarians and classroom teachers. ALA also strongly supports permitting state program funds to be used to recruit and train school librarians.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS – Support “network neutrality” and expansion of the “E-rate” program to accelerate the availability and affordability of high-speed broadband internet service in public libraries in every community in the country. Precluding telecommunications providers from “throttling” the internet for profit is vital to our economy and democracy. Congress first authorized the “E-rate” in the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The program provides discounts to public libraries, and to public and private K-12 schools, for: telecommunications services, Internet access, and closely related costs.
COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION:
KEY FACTS ABOUT 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES

- Number of public libraries and branches in the United States in 2011? ................. 16,766
  Of franchised McDonalds? ...................... 12,546

- Percentage of Americans who said in 2013 that closure of their public library would have a
  “major impact” on their community? .......... 63  Who said “no impact?” .......... 7

- Percentage of Americans (aged 16 and older) who said in 2013 that the information available
  at public libraries plays an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed? .......... 95
  Who said that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community? .......... 94

- Percentage of American parents who believe that libraries are important for their children? ...... 94

- Percentage of US public libraries offering services for job seekers in 2013? ........ 96

- Number of times American students visited a K–12 school library in 2011? ............... 1.3 billion

- Number of movie tickets sold here in the same year? .................. 1.3 billion

- Percentage of U.S. public libraries with free wireless internet access in 2011? .... 89  In 2014? ... 98

- National internet connection speed goal for libraries? .... 1 Gigabit (1,000 Mb) per second
  Percentage of public libraries with a “1 Gig” connection in 2013? ..... 2
  With 10% or more of that speed (100Mbs)? .... <10  With 1% or less (10Mbs)? .... 50

- Estimated average number of users simultaneously sharing a library’s internet connection? .... 20

- Reference questions answered per week in 2011 by US public and academic librarians? .. 6.6 million

- Miles a single-file line of 6.6 million people would stretch? ...... 3,855 (Ocean City, MD to Juneau, AK)

- Cents of each dollar spent on higher education received by academic libraries in 2011? ............ 3

- Dollars spent annually by Americans on library materials? .... 1 billion
  On home video games? .... 18.6 billion

- Estimated number of public libraries offering 3D printer access in 2009? ........ 0  In 2013? ....... 250