

**Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ITEM NO.: **5.D**

MEETING DATE: **Nov. 7, 2025**

SUBJECT: **ALA Councilor Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Nick Tepe**

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Workforce Changes and Staffing Reductions

By now most of you have heard that on October 16, ALA laid off multiple staff, including Deborah Caldwell-Stone, the director of the Office of Intellectual Freedom. While the reduction in staff was not surprising given the severe financial challenges that ALA is continuing to work to address, most Councilors agreed that communication around the layoffs could have been much better. Following information about the layoffs being shared on social media, President Sam Helmick [released a statement](#) to Council and the membership, and a [full press release](#) was issued on October 21.

According to the statements, the reductions in staff followed months of assessment and analysis, and reflect targeted, limited adjustments across several departments. However, the full impacts of the changes and any necessary restructuring will continue to evolve over the next few months. I will share more information on these changes as I have it.

With regards to the Office of Intellectual Freedom, the statements reassured members that “OIF remains fully operational, led by Deputy Director Sarah Lamdan, a respected legal expert and advocate for information access, and supported by a full team of subject-matter experts who will continue to guide and represent ALA’s critical work in this area.” In speaking with colleagues involved with intellectual freedom at ALA, they agreed that OIF is in good hands to continue working to address the intellectual freedom challenges facing our profession.

It should also be noted that as part of the ongoing assessments to reduce costs and work towards eliminating the deficit in the budget, ALA has been proactively reviewing the nearly 1,000 programs that it offers to ensure that resources are focused on initiatives that have the greatest impact. This program review started last Fall as part of ALA Forward. Some programs may be paused, consolidated, or redesigned, while others will be strengthened. There was continued discussion at the October 30 Executive Board meeting about the findings of the program assessment.

Texas HB 900

On October 21, a Federal judge in Waco, Texas declared that [House Bill 900](#) violates the constitution. A copy of the final order can be accessed here: [Book People v. Wong](#). In November of 2023, the Freedom to Read Foundation and the American Association of School Librarians filed an amicus curiae brief in the Fifth Circuit that supported the request by the plaintiffs to halt enforcement HB 900 on the grounds that it violates the First Amendment rights of booksellers, publishers, authors and students. A copy of the amicus brief can be accessed here: [FTRF and AASL Amici Curiae Brief](#).

HB 900 would have compelled any vendor who sold books to a Texas school district or charter school to review and rate all of the books already sold to the school and any book it

wishes to sell to schools in the future. Books would have been rated as either "sexually explicit," "sexually relevant" or "no rating" based on unclear and arbitrary government criteria. Under the law, students in Texas would not have been allowed to read or borrow books that merely touch on the topics of sex or relationships regardless of the work's literary, scientific or artistic value. The law would have impaired students' freedom to read and learn, and placed many of the classic and contemporary books usually found in school and classroom libraries at risk of unconstitutional censorship. Additionally, because of the buying power of Texas schools, this could have had nationwide impacts on the library marketplace.