

**Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ITEM NO.: **6.A**

MEETING DATE: **March 13, 2026**

SUBJECT: **ALA Councilor Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Nick Tepe**

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Council Winter Virtual Meetings

Council's midwinter virtual meetings were held at the end of January, and continued the trend of Council engaging effectively on important matters for the organization without getting bogged down or distracted by items that are not of immediate importance to the organization. Discussion was so robust on several important items that Council was not able to finish our work in the scheduled three meetings, and so will be meeting again on March 10 to finish the items that were slated for this session.

The reorganization of standing committees that came from the "COO Review" that I mentioned in my previous report passed Council with minimal discussion, which I mostly credit to a lot of pre-work done by committee members to ensure that councilors understood why the Committee on Organization (COO) was making these recommendations, and why they were important for the continued success of the organization. Fundamentally this comes down to two factors: first, the organization is shrinking as more and more libraries are reducing staff and staff support to participate in professional organizations, which means there are fewer volunteers available to serve on committees. Second, the organization's financial crisis means that we have to reduce the number of staff available to assist these committees, and the remaining staff do not have the capacity to effectively support so many committees.

The 10 motions brought to council by COO resulted in a net reduction of 9 standing committees, taking us from 38 standing committees to 29. While there is probably more streamlining that needs to happen, this is a good start. Three of the motions received the most discussion. First, the recommendation to rename the Budget Analysis and Review Committee to Finance committee, and change its membership to include members of the Executive Board in order to eliminate the Executive Board's Finance and Audit committee. This will eliminate the need for staff to present and get approval twice from the two separate committees. Second, the recommendation to merge the Committee on the Status of Women in Libraries into the Committee on Diversity. While CoSWoL predated the Committee on Diversity by a number of years, today the work of the two committees runs parallel, and this merge will provide more opportunities to align the work of the committees. Third, the recommendation to merge the Committee on Professional Ethics with the Intellectual Freedom Committee. As with the Diversity committee and CoSWoL, the work of these two committees is highly aligned, and this merger will provide more opportunities to align that work. COO did consider renaming the merged committee "Professional Values" to more accurately represent the work of the committee, however with the current attacks on intellectual freedom felt that the merged committee should remain the Intellectual Freedom Committee.

Next Council approved recommended changes to the process of nominating and electing members of the Executive Board. Currently only councilors who are serving their terms are eligible for election to the Executive Board, however the motion approved by Council expands that pool to members who, within the last five years, served on Council, in elected Division or roundtable positions, or as a chair of a standing committee. This will allow for much more flexibility in making nominations of individuals who have the specific skills that the organization needs at that moment. The actual election of the Executive Board will remain in Council. Council also approved the elimination of the Committee on Committees, which had been responsible for nominating the candidates for the Executive Board and making recommendations to the President-elect for

6.A: ALA Councilor Report

committee appointments. The Nominating Committee will be responsible for nominating candidates for Executive Board, since they are already looking organization-wide for candidates for President and Treasurer. Recommendations on committee appointments will be made by the incoming President-elect's advisory committee, a previously informal committee that will now be formalized.

One last item that needs to be highlighted is that Council approved a change to the Endowment policy to allow the Executive Board in consultation with the Endowment Trustees to waive or suspend repayment of withdrawals from the endowment outside of the annually determined payout rate. There was a great deal of discussion about this action, with many expressing concern about drawing down the endowment outside of the annual payout without repayment. While I understand some Councilors' alarm at this, I believe we have to recognize that action like this may be necessary to preserve the organization. ALA has been borrowing money at an unsustainable rate, and while we are starting to take the actions needed to fix this problem, an organization of this size will not be able to get to where it needs to be quickly. In these circumstances it may be necessary to draw down the endowment rather than paying interest on unsustainable debt. I believe that the Executive Board will take any action like this very seriously, and having worked in the past with an organization that was facing a similar set of circumstances, I recognize the necessity.

In other actions, Council also:

- Approved the last two interpretations of the new core values, Public Good and Equity. Now that all five core values have approved interpretations, they will be posted on the website and be made more widely available.
- Approved the formation of a task force to review all existing codes of conduct (in-person, virtual meeting, and online) to address inconsistencies and gaps between them. There will also likely be a change recommended to the charge of the Code of Conduct Committee to expand their responsibilities to all codes of conduct. Currently they are only responsible for the online code of conduct. Also related to this, the Membership committee had recommended a process for removing and reinstating members who may have violated the code of conduct, however Council referred the motion back to the committee pending the results of the task force's work.
- Approved changes to the Bylaws covering how unexpected vacancies in the positions of President, President-elect, and Treasurer will be filled, what constitutes a "session" vs. a "meeting" of Council, and the necessary changes for the nominating and election process for the Executive Board discussed above.

When Council reconvenes on March 10, we will consider recommended changes from the Policy Monitoring Committee, a resolution in support of librarians and institutions preserving government information since January 21, 2025, a new librarian and library workers' bill of rights, and an honorary membership. The resolution and bill of rights have already received a lot of attention and work due to the delay bringing them to the floor, and are much stronger now than when first proposed. Because of that work I believe both will pass with little additional discussion needed.

Statement Regarding H.R. 7661

In response to H.R. 7661, introduced on Feb. 24, American Library Association President Sam Helmick issued the following [statement](#):

"Parents, not politicians, should guide their children's reading. In our school, campus, and public libraries, materials are selected by trained literacy professionals who understand child development and community needs. Their work is grounded in one clear purpose: helping young people become lifelong readers.

"H.R. 7661 isn't fundamentally about protecting kids. It's about giving politicians broad authority to restrict whose stories are allowed on our shelves. That should concern anyone who believes in the freedom to read and the right of families to make decisions for themselves.

6.A: ALA Councilor Report

"Rather than targeting librarians and teachers, Congress should invest in them. The Right to Read Act offers a better path, supporting well-staffed and well-resourced school libraries, strengthening evidence-based literacy instruction, and protecting the dedicated professionals who help young people discover books that open doors and expand horizons. When we trust families, support educators, and protect the freedom to read, our young people thrive."

H.R. 7761, also known as the "Stop the Sexualization of Children Act," would modify the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 by prohibiting use of funds under the act "to develop, implement, facilitate, host, or promote any program or activity for, or to provide or promote literature or other materials to, children under the age of 18 that includes sexually oriented material, and for other purposes."

ALA urges advocates to call their members of Congress at the Capitol switchboard (202.224.3121) and ask them to oppose H.R. 7661.