

**Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ITEM NO.: **6.A**

MEETING DATE: **Jan. 16, 2026**

SUBJECT: **ALA Councilor Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Nick Tepe**

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Council Winter Virtual Meetings

While both Midwinter Conference and LibLearnX are no more, Council will still hold our regular January meetings virtually, and activity is starting to pick up ahead of those meetings. As of now I am not anticipating anything out of the ordinary at these sessions. I expect that there will be ongoing discussion of ALA's financial situation and the steps being taken under the "ALA Forward" initiative ([link here](#), ALA members only) as we continue to work towards streamlining the organization and working within our means. As Treasurer Larry Neal said in his [annual report to the membership](#), "the Association cannot be all things to all people, and activities and programs that do not translate into member value or interest... must come to an end." However, I agree with Larry that this is not a hopeless situation, and that we have an opportunity in this process for transformation and renewal, and I will continue to work to support those efforts and represent the interests of OLC as those changes move forward.

Two initiatives that I helped with will be coming to Council for a vote during these sessions, and I expect that there will be lively debate about both. First, following the recommendations of the ad-hoc committee that reviewed eligibility for and election of the Executive Board, the Executive Board has put forward proposals to make changes to this process that would allow anyone who has served on Council or in Division or Round Table leadership in the last five years to run for Executive Board. As a member of the ad-hoc committee I am in support of this change, and I believe it is important as the size of Council shrinks and the needs of the organization for expert member-leaders grows. The committee's and the Executive Board's proposal have recommended leaving the election of Executive Board members to Council, in order to maintain the connection between Council as the policy-making body of ALA and the Executive Board. This proposal also includes the dissolution of the Committee on Committees, with the nomination of Executive Board nominees moving to the Nominating Committee, and advising the president-elect on committee appointments moving to the president-elect's advisory committee. This will require formalizing the role of the president-elect's advisory committee, however since a committee has been formed to support incoming presidents-elect for some time it will still result in a reduction in the number of committees the Association has to support.

Second, the Committee on Organization will be presenting our final recommendations from the "COO Review" which started a couple years ago. The Committee's proposal is for a net reduction of 8 committees of the Association through merging with other committees, or sunsetting and redistributing the work. COO has already started answering concerns about these changes, but we are focused on ensuring that the committees of the Association make the best use of limited staff and other resources in carrying out the volunteer work of the Association. We are planning on encouraging discussion on the Council's Connect page ahead of the sessions to try to answer as many questions and concerns ahead of time as we can, and hopefully see this proposal pass once it comes to the floor.

In addition to the items I was directly involved with, we will also be taking action on proposals from the Policy Monitoring Committee and Bylaws Committee as they continue their work to clean up and streamline those documents following the reorganization passed by the membership in 2023. We will also be approving the interpretations of the Equity and Public Good core values, which were extended from Annual in 2025.

Federal Court Decisions

The end of the year brought a mixed bag in the ongoing court cases related to libraries and intellectual freedom. In more positive news, on [November 21st](#) the U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island struck down the Administration's attempts to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). This was followed on [December 3rd](#) by a statement from IMLS that all the agency's grants had been reinstated. While the future funding of IMLS continues to hang in the balance as the Federal budget process remains stalled, this was at least some good news in the short term. ALA continues to be involved in [legal actions](#) in support of IMLS and continues to [lobby for support](#) of IMLS and LSTA in the FY 2026 budget.

On the other side, on December 8th the Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal in *Little v. Llano County*. This lets stand the Fifth Circuit's decision allowing the removal of books, including ones dealing with themes of race and LGBT identity, from the Llano County public library system. This means that the decision stands in the Fifth Circuit's territory of Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and in those states library governing bodies may remove books from the library's collection regardless of the professional judgement of librarians or the interests of community members. In October, the ALA, Freedom to Read Foundation, and Texas Library Association submitted an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to reaffirm public libraries as beacons of democracy and to safeguard library professionals' standards requiring them to curate collections to meet their communities' informational needs regardless of party, subject, or viewpoint. ALA's official response to the Supreme Court's refusal to hear the appeal can be found [here](#).