



## Memorandum

**To:** NJLA Board of Directors and Members  
**From:** Eileen M. Palmer, ALA Chapter Councilor  
**Date:** 3/15/2021  
**Re:** Monthly Report

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### **ALA MidWinter Actions**

A summary of all actions taken at MidWinter, including the text of resolutions may be found at:

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/2021%20Council%20Actions%20.pdf>

I have shared this document with the leadership list and encouraged sections, roundtables, and committees to review and identify any ALA actions that they think warrant consideration on a state level.

### **American Rescue Plan Act**

Libraries are eligible for billions of dollars in recovery funding as part of the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 passed by Congress on Wednesday, March 10th, 2021. The package includes \$200 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the largest single increase in the agency's 25-year history. The package also includes billions of dollars in academic, public and school library-eligible programs, including the Emergency Education Connectivity Fund through the federal E-rate program. ALA has had extraordinary success in assuring that libraries were included in this legislation (as well as in the CARES Act of 2020). NJ's share of the funds awarded to IMLS is \$3.9 million. The State Librarian has already asked the NJ library community to provide input on how this funding can best meet the needs in NJ. NJLA should consider responding.

### **Build America's Libraries Act**

Introduced on January 28, 2021 in the Senate by Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), along with Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR), as well as on March 3, 2021 in the House by Rep. Andy Levin (D-MI-9) and Rep. Don Young (R-AK-AL), the Build America's Libraries Act would fund upgrades to the nation's library infrastructure to address challenges such as natural disasters, COVID-19, broadband capacity, environmental hazards, and accessibility barriers. This groundbreaking legislation would pave the way for new and improved library facilities in underserved communities across the country.

Funding would be distributed through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to state library agencies. State libraries would then award grants on a competitive basis to libraries in each state. Funding would be prioritized to libraries serving marginalized communities, such as high-poverty areas. Additionally, IMLS would provide funding directly to tribal libraries. Eligible facilities under the Build America's Libraries Act include public libraries, tribal libraries, and state libraries that provide service directly to the general public.

ALA reached out to NJLA to assist in obtaining co-sponsors. Currently Senator Corey Booker and Rep. Albio Sires have signed on. NJLA ED Juliet Machie, PPC Sarah Lester and Linda Hoffman, and the state library's Peggy Cadigan have been coordinating our efforts.

Leadership Ask: Would each Board member please contact Senator Menendez's office and the office of your congressional representative to ask them to co-sponsor this bill? You can find more information about the bill at <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/buildlibraries>

### **Annual Conference**

The ALA Annual Conference will be held virtually June 23<sup>rd</sup> – June 29<sup>th</sup>. Featured speakers currently announced are Stanley Tucci and Areli Morales. Register at <https://2021.alaannual.org/registration/register-now>

### **ALA Council**

ALA Council meets next on March 31, 2021. The agenda includes an update from the Forward Together Resolutions Working Group and the joint group charged with reviewing ALA's advocacy on behalf of library workers prioritization for vaccination.

Respectfully Submitted

Eileen M. Palmer, NJLA Chapter Councilor