

**Ohio Library Council  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

---

ITEM NO.: **6.A**

MEETING DATE: **Jan. 17, 2025**

SUBJECT: **ALA Councilor Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Nick Tepe**

---

**REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

---

Standing Up for Libraries

As I mentioned in my last report, a significant number of ALA members have been expressing concern about government actions that may come against libraries and the principles of intellectual freedom due to the transition to a new administration and the results of down-ballot elections nationwide. ALA has been working to develop responses to the evolving situation and identify ways to further support library workers in this uncertain environment. Currently those efforts are coalescing under the banner of “Standing Up for Libraries,” with multiple events and initiatives happening across the organization to design strategies to guide effective work moving forward.

This week on January 15<sup>th</sup> ALA will be hosting “Standing Up for Libraries: The Next 100 Days,” the second in what is planned to be an ongoing series. On January 14<sup>th</sup> PLA will be hosting a town hall, “Public Libraries Standing Up and Standing Together,” which will feature a panel including our own Mary Ellen Icaza. Similar events and efforts are happening across all ALA units. I am planning on attending both events and will share any further details at our meeting.

LibLearnX

As usual, council activity is ramping up ahead of the final LibLearnX, held in Phoenix January 24-27. I have been participating in an ad hoc caucus of councilors working on any actions and coordination Council might be able to provide in support of efforts around the organization in response to the 2024 election. Currently the work of this caucus has focused on boosting awareness and fundraising for the [Merritt Fund](#), a trust established to support library workers who face discrimination as a member of a protected class or due to defense of intellectual freedom. The goal is to both encourage library workers facing this sort of discrimination to apply for support, and to garner additional funds for the anticipated higher demand. The group is drafting a council resolution calling on all ALA units and Chapters to identify ways to promote the Merritt Fund within their membership, as well as developing a toolkit to assist in finding ways to do this promotion.

In addition to this I am anticipating ongoing discussion around changes to the policy manual following the revision of the Bylaws two years ago, as well as updates coming from the newly adopted changes to the operating agreement.

ALA Receives Transformational Gift to Fund Scholarships

As a piece of good news we could all use right now, I wanted to be sure you all saw that ALA has received the largest bequest in its history from James W. Lewis of Washington, D.C. From the press release:

**6.A: ALA Councilor Report**

*The approximately \$25 million bequest is truly transformational and will fund scholarships for aspiring librarians, ensuring future generations of highly educated and committed librarians prepared to meet the informational needs of their communities, according to Leslie Burger, ALA Interim Executive Director.*

*Mr. Lewis' gift will fund library school scholarships for students with demonstrated financial needs. These scholarships will benefit legions of young people who would otherwise be unable to pursue professional librarianship.*

*The American Library Association provides more than \$300,000 in scholarships annually for studies toward master's degrees in library and information science at ALA-accredited library schools. In the future, the bequest from Mr. Lewis could triple the funds available to support scholarships, significantly expanding educational access.*