

**Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ITEM NO.: **5.D**

MEETING DATE: **Sept. 16, 2022**

SUBJECT: **ALA Councilor Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Nick Tepe**

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

ALA Governance

Work continues on the revision of the ALA Constitution and Bylaws that was officially started with the first vote to rescind the ALA Constitution at the annual conference in June. As required by the current constitution, Council met (virtually) at the end of August to hold the second vote to rescind the Constitution within the time limit specified in the current constitution. In what was probably a record, business on this action item was concluded in just 40 minutes, with 126 members voting in favor and only 2 abstaining. This does give me some hope that the process of creating the new, streamlined Bylaws will go smoothly in the lead up to LLX in January, and that we will be able to approve the new Bylaws at our meetings in New Orleans and have the new Bylaws ready for the membership to approve during regular elections in the Spring.

As part of the August meeting, the Constitution and Bylaws committee shared their work plan for the revision of the Bylaws, and the first draft was just sent out for review by Council on September 3rd. The committee has noted that their work includes both reconciling and streamlining the current ALA Constitution and the current ALA Bylaws — which currently overlap and, in some cases, contradict each other — as well as incorporating the changes proposed by the Transforming ALA Governance task force. This initial draft will be open for comments through the end of the month, at which time we will hold a virtual meeting to discuss any comments or concerns about the current version. Those will then be incorporated into a second draft scheduled to be released in early November. Following the same process as the first draft, a third draft will then be released in early January ahead of the LLX governance meetings.

The nearly unanimous vote on this second action to rescind the constitution gives me some hope that we are moving in a positive direction, and I'm looking forward to a lot of discussion in Council over the next few months.

ALA Statement on Reproductive Health

I wanted to be sure you all were aware of the statement issued by the ALA Executive Board on August 9th in response to proposed state legislation that would censor library materials or put at risk the library workers who provide access to information, including information about reproductive health care. “ALA stands committed to the free, fair, and unrestricted exchange of ideas and the right of library patrons to seek information free from observation or unwanted surveillance by the government or other third parties, in accordance with the law and the US Constitution... The passage of [recent state legislation prohibiting abortion]—and proposals to adopt similar legislation in other states—has prompted concerns that provisions within those bills may be used to pursue criminal or civil charges against library workers.”

I believe that statements like this one that lean on libraries' role of providing information and librarians' expertise in locating and navigating information is precisely how we should be handling the many challenges that we are currently facing as a profession. As librarians are individually increasing singled out personally for attacks it is essential that we remind our patrons that we are professionals and experts committed to the free flow of information and ideas.

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