

**Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ITEM NO.: **5.D**

MEETING DATE: **Sept. 15, 2023**

SUBJECT: **ALA Councilor Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Nick Tepe**

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Government Agencies Dropping ALA Memberships

Shortly before our July meeting the Montana State Library Commission (a governmental agency) withdrew the Montana State Library's membership in ALA, [stating](#) "our oath of office and resulting duty to the Constitution forbids association with an organization led by a Marxist." I know that this was discussed at the July Board meeting, but I wanted to update you all on further developments as well as the unofficial discussion about it among Council members.

In the wake of Montana's announcement, Freedom Caucuses in several states including Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Idaho have called on state library agencies and organizations to withdraw their ALA membership. There have also been a couple other instances of similar actions to target ALA or to separate government agencies from library associations who are affiliated with ALA, including a [letter](#) from Senators Kevin Cramer (R-ND) Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Mike Braun (R-IN) to IMLS demanding an investigation into ALA's "active religious discrimination against Brave Books, a Christian children's book publisher," and the [South Carolina Department of Education](#) formally discontinuing any partnerships with South Carolina Association of School Librarians as an organization due to SCASL's work against censorship undermining the concerns of parents.

In conversations among Chapter Councilors, those from states where this sort of action has not yet happened but is a possibility have talked about the challenge of taking a strong stance against these actions due to the possibility of such a stance calling attention to the organization and creating additional calls to withdraw from ALA. At the same time, there is a very strong feeling in Council as a whole that ALA and Chapters should take a strong stand in defense of ALA and its elected leadership. Thus far the [New York Library Association](#) and the [District of Columbia Library Association](#) have issued statements in defense of ALA and President Drabinski. The issue and the challenges have not completely subsided over the last two months, and I expect that if we continue to see these sorts of challenges Council will discuss the topic and consider resolutions in response to it at LLX.

2024 World Library and Information Congress

As I mentioned in my July report, at the Annual Conference Council passed a resolution objecting to the selection of Dubai for the 2024 WLIC and calling on IFLA to find an alternative site. Since then IFLA conducted a survey of its membership in which 68% of their members objected to Dubai for the site of WLIC. Despite this result, the [IFLA Governing Board chose to keep Dubai](#) as the site for WLIC. The Executive Board has discussed what's next for ALA in light of this decision, and while they decided not to have the International Relations Committee survey their membership regarding the decision, they will be seeking feedback from members about this decision and working on ALA's

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response in the coming weeks and months. I expect that there will not be formal action until LLX unless the situation changes to demand a more immediate response.

Texas School Book Law (HB 900)

The Freedom to Read Foundation and the American Association of School Librarians [joined an amicus brief](#) opposing Texas HB 900, which would require booksellers to review and rate all of the books already sold to the school and any book it wishes to sell to schools in the future for sexual content. Because of the scale of school book buying in Texas this law would likely have effects on the juvenile book market nationwide. There are many questions about how this law could be practically implemented, as well as concerns about the constitutionality of the law. A federal judge has [granted a temporary injunction](#) on the law while a lawsuit challenging it moves forward, however Texas is appealing the injunction.