

**Ohio Library Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

ITEM NO.: **5.A**

MEETING DATE: **July 19, 2024**

SUBJECT: **ALA Councilor Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Nick Tepe**

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Council Meetings at Annual Conference

Council meetings at the Annual Conference were solid meetings with careful consideration of the matters brought to Council with very little of the distraction or confusion that sometimes accompanies meetings of a group of people this large. Along with routine or organizational actions, there were several actions worth noting.

First, a resolution to increase services and support for school and academic library state organizations that are not the official ALA state chapter from the Chapter Relations Office, Public Policy and Advocacy Office, and Office of Intellectual Freedom was introduced ([CD#51](#)). This is an updated version of a resolution that was to be introduced at LLX this past January, but was pulled by the authors for further work. The revised resolution calls for the creation of a task force that will “further the understanding and awareness of these inequities and... consider action steps” and that will report back to Council during ALA’s 2025 Annual Conference. The motion passed 151-5 with three voters abstaining.

Next, a resolution to reaffirm ALA’s commitment to intellectual freedom was introduced to frame the challenges that are currently facing libraries, and put out a call to action for supporters to petition their elected officials to protect, preserve, and defend the First Amendment and the right to read freely ([CD#52](#)). Too often Council business gets lost in minutiae or very specific resolutions with things like our commitment to intellectual freedom being taken for granted. This resolution was an effort to explicitly state what we are facing and where our focus needs to be. After many positive comments from librarians in states facing extraordinary challenges to intellectual freedom, the resolution passed unanimously.

Finally, a resolution directing the Executive Board to form a working group to develop Societal Statement Guidelines for ALA, using a framework provided by the Center for Association Leadership was introduced. This resolution is an effort to provide a framework for evaluating the risks and the relevance of official statements from ALA on civic or social issues. The working group will provide an update by ALA’s 2025 Annual Conference in Philadelphia ([CD#53](#)). A framework like this could provide a useful tool for ensuring that the work of Council and statements by the organization are focused on the issues that most directly affect libraries and not distracted by issues that may be important but that could be a distraction from our core work. The motion passed 151-6 with five voters abstaining.

It is also worth noting that an undercurrent of the Council meetings was the ongoing work on revising the organization’s operating agreement, which determines how the different units of ALA relate to the organization as a whole and how the organization’s finances are managed across all the various units. There are many strong feelings around this issue, from units that produce more revenue than they expend and want to use those funds to further their work, to units that expend more than they take in but believe that they are

5.A: ALA Councilor Report

essential to ALA's mission. While this work is currently happening between the different units, finance committees, and the Executive Board, it will come to Council eventually, and hard conversations will be had about the structure and the future of the organization.

Raymond Pun steps down as President-Elect

On June 14th, President-elect Raymond Pun [announced](#) that he would not be able to take the position due to health concerns. The [ALA Bylaws](#) state that a vacancy in the position of President-elect shall be filled by the Executive Board, however because the position was not officially vacant until the new officers and Executive Board were seated at the end of Annual Conference, no official action could be taken until after Annual Conference. Since there was advance notice of the vacancy, a working group of incoming and outgoing Board members was already considering options, and the new Executive Board will be making their determination on how to fill the position and bringing it to a special meeting of Council for confirmation on July 23rd.

OIF Statement on Hoopla Age and Content Ratings

The ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom released a [statement](#) on Hoopla's addition of a new audience or content filtering system being made available to librarians and library workers. The system will allow librarians and library workers to filter the platform's content based on whether Midwest Tape / Hoopla believes the materials contain content some consider questionable or controversial for certain audiences. Midwest Tape representatives told OIF that the system was developed in response to librarians and library workers' requests for a new tool to help them comply with state legislation regulating libraries' content purchasing decisions. OIF expressed concerns that such filtering systems restrict intellectual freedom and may be unconstitutional as a content-based restriction on speech.