

Washington Brief
September/October 2008

Policy Programs in Portland a Great Success!

Each year, the AALL Washington Affairs Office and Government Relations Committee (GRC) hold the Legislative Advocacy and Leadership Training and Legislative and Regulatory Update during the AALL Annual Meeting. This year, due to strong participation and a fantastic set of speakers, each program provided a great forum to learn and share information about what the GRC, Washington Affairs Office, and Copyright Committee have accomplished, what's planned for the next year, and how members can get involved in AALL's advocacy work.

During the half-day Advocacy Training on Saturday, July 12, participants had the opportunity to network with one another, hear from 2007-2008 GRC Chair Scott Matheson, and receive an update from the Washington Affairs Office team. I provided participants with an overview of AALL's efforts on digital authentication, including a description of the key findings of the 2007 *State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources* and an update on the progress made since the National Summit on Digital Authentication in April 2007. Emily Feldman, AALL advocacy communications assistant, outlined the variety of ways in which the Washington Affairs Office keeps members informed and engaged on the information policy issues, including the monthly *E-Bulletin*, *AALL's Washington Blawg*, and the Advocacy online discussion list. See "For More AALL Advocacy News" on this page to learn how to stay informed.

The Advocacy Training also featured a panel discussion, "County Law Libraries: Facing Challenges, Finding Solutions," moderated by GRC member Angela Baldree, law librarian at the Lake County Law Library in Ohio. This panel provided a chance for participants to hear ways that county law libraries handle some of the unique problems they face, including funding issues, the challenges of outreach and training to the community, and a large variation in size in some states. We were honored to have Jacquelyn Jurkins, director of the Multnomah Law Library in Oregon; Joan M. Bellistri, law librarian at the Anne Arundel County Public Law Library in Maryland; and Larry Meyer, director of the law library for San Bernardino County in California, on our panel to discuss these important issues.

Our guest speakers at the Advocacy Training this year were Christy Splitt, legislative aide to Oregon State Representative Ben Cannon, and Marjorie Taylor, senior policy advisor for Oregon's Department of Administrative Services. Splitt and Taylor provided valuable insider tips on how to successfully advocate for issues important to law librarians. Some of these tips include building relationships with your legislators, becoming a knowledgeable resource on information policy issues, and building coalitions around your issues.

Splitt and Taylor also stayed for the second half of the training to provide further insight to the group of people gathered for the advocacy tips and tools break-out session. The other two break-out sessions focused on funding and outreach for county, court, and government law librarians and authentication of online legal resources.

On Tuesday, July 15, the Government Relations Committee held its Annual Legislative and Regulatory Update. This year, Chair Matheson presented two special awards during the update. First, we honored former AALL Washington Affairs Representative Bob Oakley by naming him the first recipient of the new AALL Member Advocacy Award. The award, now named the Robert L. Oakley Member Advocacy Award, will be given annually to an AALL member who has been an outstanding advocate for law libraries and legal information at the federal, state, or local level.

In addition, Matheson presented the 2008 Public Access to Government Information Award to OMB Watch, whose executive director, Gary Bass, was our invited guest speaker this year. Bass gave an engaging address about the state of public access to information and encouraged law librarians to start a conversation about what we want for the future of access.

Please join us next year in Washington, D.C., for our *full-day* Advocacy Training on July 24, 2009. After the morning update session about AALL's hottest advocacy issues and training on how to deliver your message effectively, you'll spend the afternoon on Capitol Hill meeting with your own representatives. Next summer's session will mirror the very first Advocacy Training held during AALL's 1999 Annual Meeting in D.C. Mark the date on your calendar now and watch for more information, including how to register, in January. Thanks to the generosity and support of the AALL Executive Board, there is no cost to participate in this important Advocacy Training session. We hope to see you there!

New Bill Would Improve Funding for Law Library of Congress

After returning to Washington, D.C., energized from the Annual Meeting, our advocacy work picked up immediately with the introduction of an important bill, H.R. 6589, the *Charles H. W. Meehan Law Library Improvement and Modernization Act*. This bill will authorize a one-time additional \$3.5 million for the Law Library of Congress and its own separate line item in the federal budget beginning in FY 2010. It will also establish the Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Support Program, which will allow outside funding to be raised and provided to the law library for new enhanced services.

Immediate Past President Ann T. Fessenden and representatives from the American Bar Association testified at an October 2007 hearing before the House Committee on Administration in support of the new line item. On July 25, AALL President James E. Duggan wrote letters to Representatives Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) and Dan Lungren (R-Calif.) to thank them for their commitment to increasing funding for the law library. The Committee on House Administration reported H.R. 6589 favorably on July 30.

We immediately asked AALL members to call or set up meetings with their representatives during the August recess to encourage additional co-sponsors to support the bill. Thank you all for taking action! We will keep you updated on this bill's progress as we continue our efforts to get it introduced in the Senate.

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