

AALL ACTION ALERT
JANUARY 22, 2009
Updated from [December 23, 2008 Action Alert](#)

TAKE ACTION TO WELCOME NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

The start of the New Year brought more than 60 newly elected Senators and Representatives to Capitol Hill to join their colleagues in the 111th Congress. If you have a new member of Congress, it is important to take advantage of this exciting time to educate them about our issues. Below, we've provided some tips for making contact with your new representative so that you can begin to form the important relationships that will allow you to become a successful advocate.

The New Members of Congress

The Senate welcomed ten new members in January. Information about your Senators, including contact information and links to their new Web sites, is located on the [Senate Web site](#). The new members are:

Mark Begich (D-AK)
Mark Udall (D-CO)
Jim Risch (R-ID)
Roland Buris (D-IL)
Mike Johanns (R-NE)
Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
Tom Udall (D-NM)
Kay Hagan (D-NC)
Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
Mark Warner (D-VA)

The close Minnesota race between Al Franken (D) and incumbent Senator Norm Coleman (R) is still undecided, with incumbent Coleman challenging the recent recount.

In the House, more than 50 new members were elected to office. The Committee on House Administration has provided helpful information about them in the [New Member Pictorial Directory](#). A list of Representatives with links to their Web sites is located on the [House Web site](#).

How to Make Your First Contact

First, familiarize yourself with your new member of Congress. Has your new representative been in public office before? Does he or she have a J.D.? What issues are important to him or her? With this knowledge, you'll be prepared to make the initial contact with your new representative in January. Second, be prepared to write an email, call the D.C. or district office, set up a meeting with staff in your district, or request a site

visit to show your new member how important law libraries are to the community. While writing an email is the best method of written communication, if you prefer to write a letter, be sure to fax it or deliver it to the district office. Since the anthrax attacks on the U.S. Capitol, snail mail is extremely slow and would not be an effective way to deliver your important message in a timely way.

Tips for Effectively Getting Your Message Heard

Whether you write an email or letter, make a phone call, or meet with staff in person, you can use this opportunity to introduce yourself as an advocate for law libraries. Here are some tips to help you relay an effective message:

- Introduce yourself as a constituent and member of the American Association of Law Libraries and your chapter (if applicable).
- Congratulate your new member on his or her election victory.
- Describe your law library and what makes it important to your community. Who are the library users? How does the community benefit from your services?
- If your institution is a depository library, explain the importance of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Take a moment to point out a few of the reasons your library is so unique and how your library serves as an important resource to ensure that the public has access to government information. You may want to refer to the Government Printing Office's [collection of responses](#) on the value of depository libraries for ideas. Remember, your new representative may not be familiar with the FDLP, so be sure to describe what the program is.

By giving examples of some of the recent victories achieved by AALL and law librarians, you'll demonstrate the broad scope of our issues and the strength of our advocacy efforts. Here are some examples of our recent successes, and a brief summary of the issues, that you may want to include:

- Introduction of H.R. 6589, the *Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Improvement and Modernization Act* to increase support for the Law Library of Congress.
This bill would authorize a one-time, additional \$3.5 million for the Law Library of Congress, add a separate line item in the Federal budget for the Law Library, and establish the Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Support Program to allow outside funding to be raised and provided to the Law Library. The bill was introduced by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-16) in July 2008 with support from AALL and the American Bar Association.
- Reopening of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) libraries.
Many AALL members are frequent users of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) libraries. AALL opposed the library closures since EPA's announcement of their library reorganization efforts in 2006. We are

grateful to Congress for providing EPA with a \$1 million order included in the FY 2008 appropriations omnibus bill (P.L.110-161) to reopen the libraries. Three regional libraries in Chicago, Dallas, and Kansas City and a combined EPA Headquarters and Chemical Libraries reopened their doors to the public in September 2008.

- Implementation of the new National Institutes of Health Open Access mandate. This new law, also included in the FY 2008 appropriations omnibus bill, requires free online access to findings from NIH-funded research within 12 months. The public will now be able to access these articles through PubMed Central for free.

While we don't have many specific bills to support at this time, here are a few of the upcoming issues that we predict will be of importance to law libraries in the coming year. Take a moment to ask your lawmaker for support on all or some of the following issues:

- Improved funding for the Law Library of Congress.
Ask your member to support legislation to provide more money for the Law Library of Congress, our Nation's de facto national law library.
- Adequate funding for the Government Printing Office and the Federal Depository Library Program.
Your member can show his or her support for public access to government information by supporting the appropriations request of the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO).
- Enactment of net neutrality legislation.
By supporting net neutrality legislation, your legislator can demonstrate his or her commitment to ensuring that all Internet traffic is treated equally. The issue of net neutrality is very important for law libraries because law librarians are providers, creators and users of digital, legal information.

In closing, thank your legislator and reiterate that you look forward to working with him or her during the 111th Congress. Be sure to include your contact information so that your lawmaker's staff can follow up. This initial contact will allow you to start developing a relationship with your lawmaker and become a successful advocate for law libraries in the future.