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### **The AALL Washington E-Bulletin**

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## **UPDATES FROM THE HILL AND THE WASHINGTON OFFICE**

### **Join Us in Portland!**

We are pleased to announce the [final agenda](#) for the Legislative Advocacy Leadership Training, “Navigating the Advocacy Wilderness: Tools and Tips to Become an Effective Advocate.” The training will be held on Saturday, July 12 from 8:00 am to noon in the Oregon Convention Center, Room B113.

We have an excellent set of speakers this year and we are especially pleased to host two local Guest Speakers: Christy Splitt, Legislative Aide to Oregon State Rep. Ben Cannon, and Marjorie Taylor, Senior Policy Advisor for Oregon’s Department of Administrative Services. The Guest Speakers will give you a look into the Oregon legislative process and provide you with tips on how to effectively communicate with your legislators.

In addition, we have recently published a guide to the [Policy Track Programs](#) at the Annual Meeting. The Policy Track Programs include meetings and events hosted by the Washington Affairs Office, Government Relations Committee (GRC), Copyright Committee and the new Electronic Legal Information Access & Citation (ELIAC) Committee.

Please be sure to attend one of our policy committee meetings if you can!

*Access to Electronic Legal Information and Citation Formats Committees (Outgoing and Incoming)*

Sunday, July 13, 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM, OCC-C126

*GRC Meeting (Outgoing and Incoming)*

Monday, July 14, 12:00 PM - 1:15 PM, OCC-E147

*Chapter Leadership Roundtable: Government Relations*

Monday, July 14, 2008, 5:15 PM – 6:15 PM, OCC-D134

*Copyright Committee Meeting (Outgoing and Incoming)*

Monday, July 14, 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM, OCC-D139

### **Strengthening Transparency and Accountability in Federal Spending Act of 2008 ([S.3077](#))**

On June 2, AALL sent a [letter](#) to Senator [Barack Obama](#) (D-IL) and Senator [Tom Coburn](#) (R-OK) in support of a bill that the Senators introduced, the *Strengthening Transparency*

*and Accountability in Federal Spending Act of 2008* ([S.3077](#)). The new bill will help strengthen the Federal Accountability and Transparency Act ([P.L. 109-282](#)), the law that resulted in [USASpending.gov](#), a searchable web site of Federal grants, contracts, loans and other financial assistance. [Chris Murphy](#) (D-CT-5), [Mark Souder](#) (R-IN-3), [Henry Waxman](#) (D-CA-30), [Edolphus Towns](#) (D-NY-10), [Wm. Lacy Clay](#) (D-MO-1), [Virginia Foxx](#) (R-NC-5), and [John Shadegg](#) (R-AZ-3) introduced an identical bill in the House on June 26.

### **Federal Advisory Committee Act Amendments of 2008 ([H.R. 5687](#))**

On June 24, the House of Representatives passed [H.R. 5687](#), the *Federal Advisory Committee Act Amendments of 2008*, to strengthen the public disclosure provisions in the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972. H.R. 5687 would increase the transparency of advisory committees, ensure political independence among committee members, and improve review and reporting requirements. [Rep. William Lacy Clay](#) (D-MO-1) and [Rep. Henry Waxman](#) (D-CA-30) introduced the bill, which AALL strongly supports, at the beginning of April.

### **Improving Public Access to Documents Act of 2008 ([H.R. 6193](#))**

On Wednesday, June 11, the House Committee on Homeland Security's [Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment](#) held a [hearing](#) on [H.R. 6193](#), *The Improving Public Access to Documents Act of 2008*. The bill, which AALL supports, would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop and administer policies, procedures, and programs to promote the implementation of a Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Framework at the [Department of Homeland Security](#).

As we reported in the May Edition of the [E-Bulletin](#), the White House issued a [memorandum](#) last month on new rules governing the designation and sharing of CUI. The CUI Framework is intended to ease information sharing in the government and rein in the various control markings used by agencies, such as "For Official Use Only" (FOUO), "Official Use Only" (OUO), and "Limited Official Use" (LOU).

### **Letter to Congress in Support of Whistleblower Protections**

Earlier this month, we joined 111 organizations on a [letter](#) to members of Congress in support of reconciling House and Senate legislation ([H.R. 985](#) and [S. 274](#)) to protect whistleblowers. The letter outlines several of the key provisions necessary for a strong whistleblower law, including specifically protecting federal scientists who report efforts to alter, misrepresent, or suppress federal research; extending meaningful protections to FBI and intelligence agency whistleblowers; and strengthening protections for federal contractors. Whistleblowers are key to ensuring government accountability and this letter showed the strong support of a diverse public interest community on this issue.

## **FISA Bill Passes House, Awaits Senate Approval**

On June 20, the House passed the FISA Amendments Act of 2008 ([H.R. 6304](#)) by a vote of 293 to 129. This vote came after months of negotiations surrounding several contentious provisions, including whether to grant retroactive immunity to telecommunications companies and how to protect the privacy of Americans. The compromise bill requires courts to determine if there is "substantial evidence" showing that telecommunications companies received written requests authorizing wiretapping activity. In addition, H.R. 6304 limits the scope of overseas wiretapping to non-Americans. The Senate is expected to take up the bill after Congress returns from the July 4<sup>th</sup> recess.

## **OUTSIDE THE BELTWAY: CHAPTER NEWS**

If you have news on policy or legislative issues in your AALL Chapter, please [let us know](#). News might address legislation you are tracking, events your chapter is hosting, or anything you think might be of interest to our community. We'd love to hear from you!

## **Chapters Show Support for Government Printing Office Appropriations**

The [Colorado Association of Law Libraries](#) (CoALL), the [Chicago Association of Law Libraries](#) (CALL), and the [Northern California Association of Law Libraries](#) (NOCALL) wrote letters to their representatives late last month in support of the Government Printing Office's (GPO) 2009 appropriations request. The chapter letters showed support for GPO's FDSys project and their efforts on authentication, reinforcing the same points made by Acting Washington Affairs Representative Mary Alice Baish in her [testimony](#) before the House Committee on Appropriations' [Subcommittee on Legislative Branch](#)'s Public Witness Hearing on May 7. Members of Congress need to hear from their constituents in support of GPO's funding, and we thank CoALL, CALL, and NOCALL for their excellent letters!

## **FREE TIME WELL SPENT: Further Reading for the Information Policy Junkie**

### **EPA's *National Dialogue* Comes to a Close**

Over the last few months, EPA has conducted listening sessions, online "Jam Sessions" with employees, and online comment periods as part of their [National Dialogue on Access to Environmental Information](#) to collect ideas about how to improve access to their environmental information. Rounding up the comments and summarizing the results, the agency recently released their "[What We've Learned So Far](#)" on their web site.

As we [reported](#) in the [Blawg](#), many of the findings will not be surprising to law librarians. For example, EPA [reports](#), “Commenters noted that even in this age of technology and Internet access, there is still a valuable and important role that libraries and communities play for providing access to information.” In addition, “Librarians pointed out the importance of the EPA libraries and the need to reopen the closed libraries.”

These summaries provide insight into EPA’s outreach efforts and the information needs of five of EPA’s major audience groups: government officials; news media; environmental and community groups; industry; and educators, students, researchers and librarians. Thank you to those who submitted comments. Reading these reports, it is clear that EPA heard our message.

### **Web sites Offer Deeper Look into Congress**

In a June 23, 2008 article in *Information Week*, “[Web Sites Push For More Transparency and Accessibility In Government](#),” reporter K.C. Jones looks at two web sites featured at the [Personal Democracy Forum](#) in New York City June 23-24. The first, [OpenCongress](#), allows users to track bills, Members of Congress, committees, industries, issues, and more, in one location. The site offers RSS feeds for news stories and blog entries on anything the user is tracking. OpenCongress is a project of the [Sunlight Foundation](#) and the [Participatory Politics Foundation](#).

The second site is [MetaVid](#), which offers free and open archiving of the audio/video congressional record since 2006. MetaVid allows users to search their videos by Representative, legislation, or interest group. [The University of California Santa Cruz](#) provides hosting for the project, which is also supported by a grant from the Sunlight Foundation.

### **Law Day, for Your Viewing Pleasure**

On May 1, the Law Library of Congress celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Law Day by hosting a panel discussion on what the Rule of Law means to established and emerging countries. The [web cast](#) of that event is now available. The panel was moderated by Judge Harry T. Edwards and featured Rob Boone, director of the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative; Rosa Brooks, professor at the Georgetown University Law Center; Thomas Carothers, vice president for studies-international politics and governance at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; and Kurt L. Schmoke, dean of the Howard University School of Law. [Senator Lindsey Graham](#) (R-SC) gave the opening remarks.

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