As the only national association dedicated to the legal information profession and its professionals, we continue to make advances toward safeguarding, preserving, and making government information on public websites accessible. In fact, we have a Washington, DC-based government relations office overseen by AALL’s Director of Government Relations, Emily Feltren. Our priorities center on access to justice, balance in copyright, greater access to government information, transparency, and the protection of privacy.

We have been at this for a while: this year marks our thirtieth anniversary successfully representing AALL interests in Washington, DC. In 1989, the AALL Executive Board approved restructuring the existing Legislation and Legal Developments Committee into the Government Relations Committee with AALL members Robert L. Oakley of Georgetown University Law Library and Joanne Zich of American University Washington College of Law Library as the first Washington representatives for the Association.

Since then, we have achieved many successes, including, most recently, the approval by the Uniform Laws Commission of the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA) in 2011, now in force in 20 jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia, stipulating that legal material published in an electronic-only format must be designated as official. It also mandates that official electronic legal material be authenticated, preserved, and made permanently accessible to the public.

Other significant legislation that we have successfully advocated for includes the Government Printing Office (GPO) Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993, which established a means for providing the public with online access to electronic public information of the federal government, and the Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National (OPEN) Government Act of 2007 that included several key reforms to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), including ensuring timely agency responses to FOIA requests.

You, too, can be an advocate for law libraries. A great opportunity to help you get started is our upcoming AALL Day on the Hill: Advocacy Leadership Training & Lobby Day, July 12 in Washington, DC. (To register visit bit.ly/AALL19LobbyDay.) Participants will learn about the information policy issues on AALL’s agenda and how to successfully advocate for law libraries. You can then take our message to Capitol Hill for meetings with your members of Congress and their staff. I am excited about this year’s event and I hope to see you there!

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