COL weekly update, March 15

At the Office, we had an all-day meeting with incoming President Wanda Brown to share information about our Office, COL, advocacy and other policy touch points. Wanda’s interests include breaking down barriers to ALA—the opaqueness that ALA members feel about the Association that Pam mentioned on our Thursday conference call.

We also started to develop a plan for National Library Week 2019 (April 8-12) that includes to increase the number of Members of Congress making floor statements about National Library Week. We reach out to COL members to help.

Speaking of floor statements, Rep. Joyce Beatty (OH-3) gave a shout out to libraries and their work with people with disabilities when announcing a resolution to recognize Deaf History Month.

“The American Library Association applauds Representative Beatty’s resolution to officially recognize National Deaf History Month,” **ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo said**. “Equitable access to information is a core value of all librarians who develop their collections with particular attention to the needs of persons with disabilities, including those who are deaf. The seeds for observing a Deaf History Month were first planted decades ago in the District of Columbia Public Library, and it is with pleasure that ALA endorses Representative Beatty’s efforts to highlight and honor the many contributions of the deaf community to American society.”

Interesting factoids for ALAers: Honoring Deaf History Month all started with two librarians at DC Public Library who sought to raise awareness of the needs of people with hearing disabilities by teaching colleagues sign language back in 1997. First, it was a day of recognition, then it expanded to a week, and now a month. ALA Council passed a resolution in 2005 asking the President to designate March 13-April 15 as Deaf History Month. Several states have officially recognized Deaf History Month in legislation. Most important – it was a librarian who contacted Rep. Beatty to ask for the designation!

Of course, the beginning of the appropriations cycle is our #1 priority. The Office of Library Advocacy (OLA) is taking the lead, contacting advocates in the states and asking for letters of support of LSTA and IAL. Hats off to OLA for taking on this enormous assignment, critical to initiating the appropriation advocacy campaign.

A fantastic article about ALA library advocacy by Lisa Peet was published in Library Journal. <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=FY20-Budget-Proposes-to-Eliminate-IMLS-Advocates-Called-On-to-Step-Up>

Consider tweeting about it!

ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo will speak at the Census Bureau's April 1 press conference marking one year to Census Day: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2019/census-day-briefing.html> —an excellent positioning of the library’s critical role in the 2020 Census at what should be a well-attended Press Club event.