

MLA Advocacy - January 24, 2019



Practice Advocacy Every Day

The new legislature is getting settled and our new Governor is gearing up for her first State of the State on February 5. We're busy figuring out the new committee members and who could have a big impact on state aid to libraries this year. We'll be meeting with new legislators soon and recommend that you reach out to your new elected officials and invite them into the library for a tour, coffee hour, or any community event.

We need to practice advocacy every day in our libraries, in our communities and in our personal lives. As much as we might dislike some of the politics we read about every day, it's important to realize that politics and advocacy are two different things. As you know, public libraries depend on millages, penal fines, state aid and myriad other sources of funding. What you may not realize is that for every dollar funneled into your library budget, someone advocated to see that funding was not taken away.

You can help MLA advocate for our libraries by meeting your elected officials and educating them about your place in the community. Local and state elected officials and community leaders need to be educated and reminded of the good work you do every single day. That's why advocacy is everyone's responsibility. Develop a relationship with your community leaders and elected officials and educate them. That is imperative. But don't stop there, tell your neighbor, your barista and the person who changes the oil in your car. It's all about community advocacy. What type of advocacy are you doing in your community?

NARCAN Legislation Being Drafted

Our NARCAN legislation is currently being drafted and we expect it to be introduced in House. We do not anticipate opposition and hope to move it quickly through the process. The bills offer liability protection for libraries when providing the life-saving opioid antidote naloxone, common brand name Narcan, to an overdosing patron.

Dark Store Legislation Back in Play

Legislation addressing the dark store issue has been introduced by Rep. LaFave

(R-Menominee). The bill HB 4025 addresses The Michigan Tax Tribunal practice to reduce tax obligations allowing thriving big box stores to be taxed at the same rate as closed-down, abandoned stores. This is sure to garner debate as it moves along. The Daily Press in Escanaba covered the details, read more: www.dailypress.net/news/local-news/2019/01/dark-store-fight-moves-to-legislature/

Changes to Freedom of Information Act

Effective December 28, 2018, the Legislature approved two important amendments to the Michigan Freedom of Information Act. Public Act 523 added a new requirement to Section 3 regarding the information that must be included in a FOIA request. In addition, Act 523 amended Section 4 to address what happens when a requester does not pay a deposit in a timely manner. Anne Seurnyck of Foster Swift Collins & Smith PC Attorneys has more on this on their website: www.fosterswift.com/communications-admendment-FOIA-PublicAct523.html

Support Michigan Candidates

Michigan libraries have the opportunity to be represented at a national level. Please support our Michigan candidates for ALA President, AASL President-elect and ALA Council.

ALA President

Lance Werner, Executive Director at Kent District Library, is on the slate for 2020-2021 ALA President.

Werner has held numerous positions in the Michigan library community, including chairing the Michigan Library Association Legislative Committee (2015-2016), serving as president of the Lakeland Library Cooperative (2015-2016), and president of the Michigan Library Association (2012-2013).

"Having found success fighting for libraries on a local and state level, I'm eager to be a mentor and champion for library systems nationwide. I've always believed that the success of one library depends on the success of all libraries. My ultimate personal goal is to ensure that success by acting as a legislative champion for the libraries, the people who work for them and the patrons they serve. The accomplishment of this depends on helping libraries to deliver exceptional value to taxpayers and serving under-served audiences. During my 20 years as a librarian, I've witnessed libraries help people to become the absolute best versions of themselves - and to me, that's something worth fighting for." - Lance Werner

View Werner's [candidate website here](#) and check out his [blog posts](#) on the importance of empathy and kindness in the library profession and in life.

AASL President-elect

Lisa Brakel, District Library Media Specialist at Airport Community Schools, is in the running for American Association of School Librarians (AASL) President-elect. Learn more about Lisa Brakel on her [campaign website](#).

ALA Council

Holly Hibner, Adult and Teen Services Coordinator, Plymouth District Library is a candidate for a position on the ALA Council. Biographical information is available on the [ALA Elections](#) webpage.

ALA elections will be held March 11 through April 3, 2019. **Please support our Michigan candidates!**

To be eligible to vote, individuals must be members in good standing of ALA as well as applicable divisions and round tables as of **January 31, 2019.**

To learn more and make sure your vote counts, visit:

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection>

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