Senate Passes Historic Stimulus Package

March 26, 2020

Yesterday, the United States Senate passed an unprecedented $2.2 trillion stimulus package in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This bipartisan legislation is the largest economic aid package in US history, and was passed in the Senate with a unanimous 96-0 vote. It will next go to the House for a vote.

On Wednesday evening, before the Senate passed this legislation, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer announced that the House will convene at 9 a.m. Friday to consider the relief package. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is indicating that she's optimistic that the bill will pass in the House as well. President Donald Trump has indicated he will sign the measure and tweeted his congratulations after it cleared the Senate. View full the bill text here.

MLA Executive Director, Deborah E. Mikula participated in a meeting with other statewide library associations, chapters of the American Library Association (ALA) on March 25. ALA's Washington DC office is working hard to keep libraries at the forefront of the conversation with our federal legislators as stimulus packages are being developed. Not only are they working to secure dollars that will impact the library field now, but also bringing attention to what will be needed as the country eases back into operations once COVID-19 has been contained.

ALA's public policy staff are reviewing the new $2T stimulus bill to identify provisions that will affect libraries. At the surface, it is wonderful to note that the $50M to the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) will be distributed to states without the need for any matching funds. They have indicated that there may be additional resources within the education and broadband provisions as well that will be helpful to libraries.

At the urging of MLA, ALA also signed on last week to the National Council of Nonprofits coalition request urging stimulus to help the nonprofit sector to serve the American people. America's charitable nonprofits need an immediate infusion of $60 billion in capital to maintain operations, expand scope to address increasing demands, and stabilize losses from closures throughout the country. This new stimulus package may not address all concerns and we will need to continue to advocate for additional funds for nonprofits and charitable donations for

organizations such as MLA.

It is sad to note that some funding will diminish as the recession continues and we are in for long term recovery. We will need to make sure we know the impact that you are making, and the challenges faced by libraries in Michigan. We encourage you to continue to share your stories and hashtag #LibrariesStrong #MILibrariesStrong, and #StrongerTogether.