

A flurry of press releases ALA offers support... followed by retraction, and an apology to members (11/21/2016)

Document #1: Original press release

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WASHINGTON, DC — The American Library Association offers its expertise and resources to the incoming administration and the new and returning members of Congress from all parties elected on Nov. 8.

“The American Library Association is dedicated to helping all our nation’s elected leaders identify solutions to the challenges our country faces,” ALA President Julie Todaro said. “We are ready to work with President-elect Trump, his transition team, incoming administration and members of Congress to bring more economic opportunity to all Americans and advance other goals we have in common.”

Libraries themselves – 120,000 strong and embedded in the largest urban centers, small farming communities and school and university campuses – make up a robust national infrastructure immediately available to advance several policy priorities identified by the President-elect. As hubs of learning, literacy, job skills development and access to public services in virtually every community across the country, our nation’s libraries are ready and able now to expand the nationwide reach of these valuable services.

Some of these services are described in detail in a series of papers being

released this week by ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy, including:

- One Small Business at a Time: Building Entrepreneurial Opportunity in America's Communities
- America's Libraries: Powering Broadband Adoption, Access and use
- Libraries Help and Honor Our Veterans: Employment, Education and Community Connection

We trust that these resources will assist the new administration and Congress in addressing several areas of national interest announced on the website for the White House Transition Team, specifically in:

Infrastructure: As many as 33 percent of American households lack home broadband connections. Libraries use broadband technologies to help citizens, especially in the most disadvantaged and rural areas, improve their education, find a job and start a business. Investments and public policies are needed to advance the deployment of widespread high-speed broadband capabilities to libraries and other community anchor institutions, as well as to the general population.

Education: Libraries provide opportunities for digital and traditional literacy training. From hosting technology camps to teaching coding skills to offering 3D printers, libraries foster the kind of computational thinking necessary for success in today's world. Ensuring funding for federal block grants to states for the work of libraries will enable local governments to determine how to best meet the greatest needs in their own communities and make wise investments in education.

Serving veterans: Libraries help address many of the challenges experienced by members of the military when they return to civilian life. Libraries help veterans (and their families) search for a job, improve and translate job skills to the civilian context and navigate bureaucracies to receive the benefits to which they are entitled. Further collaboration with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense will allow libraries to efficiently address the issues facing our returning veterans.

"Through new and strengthened collaborations, libraries are well-positioned to serve as an ever-stronger and flexible resource to advance critical national goals," continued Todaro. "The U.S. library community looks forward to strengthening our partnerships with federal agencies, the new administration and other key stakeholders at all levels of government."

posted 11.19.2016

Source: <http://libraryjuicepress.com/blog/?p=5418>, accessed 23 February 2017.

Document #2: Text replacing above press release on ALA website

ALA offers expertise, resources to incoming administration and Congress
[RESCINDED]

ALA has rescinded this press release and removed it from the website. We regret that this means that the “Comments” section is also pulled down from this location at this time; however, we are identifying the best way to re-locate comments to another public location.

We also invite those who commented on the 11/15 release to post or re-post in the “Comments” section of the AL “Message to Members” from President Julie Todaro and the Executive Board.

On 12/6/16 President Todaro released a statement and Q&A that provides additional information. A Message to Members

posted 11/15/2016

Source: <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2016/11/ala-offers-expertise-resources-incoming-administration-and-congress>, accessed 23 February 2017.

Document #3: Apology to ALA members for 11/15/2016 press release

A Message to Members

A statement from President Julie B. Todaro and the Executive Board to American Library Association members

By Julie B. Todaro | November 21, 2016

Dear Members:

Thank you for your candid responses to our press releases re: ALA’s Libraries Bolster Opportunities. We are sorry that these communications created confusion and anger regarding our Association’s position on safeguarding and promoting its commitment to our core values including diversity, equity and inclusion. We understand that content from these press releases, including the 11/18/16 release that was posted in error, was interpreted as capitulating to and normalizing the incoming administration. ALA administration and leadership issues an apology to all who were negatively affected by these communications.

Our intent was to highlight the invaluable role that librarians and library workers play within our communities as infrastructure for resources and services, and especially where we provide unique services to special populations, such as immigrants and veterans. Yet, our core values as an association are clear—free access, intellectual freedom, privacy and confidentiality. We will stand

for these values unwaveringly, now and into the future. Our work with any administration must always first be in line with these values. And it is clear that many of these values are at odds with messaging or positions taken by the incoming administration.

Please know that we stand by our members. With this in mind, the ALA is committed to providing a platform where you can share your ideas and concerns. We have reached out to key ALA staff and have asked for an opportunity for people to comment with their thoughts, ideas, and feedback. The most accessible location for this to happen is on the American Libraries blog, *The Scoop*. Please feel free to engage with us here.

The ALA is very concerned about the role of our nation's libraries under this new administration, both at the legislative level as well as at the state and local level. That concern, however, should never eclipse our commitment to our members, to defending our core values and advancing our policy positions.

We have a great deal of work ahead of us as we work to abolish intolerance and cultural invisibility, and stand up for all the members of our communities, as we promote understanding and inclusion through our efforts. We believe that we all must work so that our voices are heard at the federal, state, and local government levels, and so we can continue to advance the issues and core values that matter to our members.

Please know that we feel—as does ALA administration and leadership—that our work with any governmental entity or individual(s) should never come at the cost of our core values as an organization. We can promise you that this will not change.

We are all concerned about the future. Please share your thoughts, ideas, and feedback in the comments section below. We need to hear from you now more than ever as we continue our work on behalf of our constituents, libraries and all librarians and library workers. Beginning Monday morning, the ALA executive board will discuss these issues and our processes and we will use your comments to help guide us in our discussions and planning as we work to earn back the trust of our members and prepare for the work ahead during this new administration.

Thank you again for your patience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Julie Todaro, ALA President, and the ALA Executive Board

posted 11/21/2016

Source: <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/a-message-to-members/>, accessed 23 February 2017.