

## Advocacy Day 2010

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The current economy makes it more important than ever to advocate for our libraries. This past year, a record-breaking group of librarians and library supporters participated in Library Advocacy Day in Washington, DC. With the American Library Association's Annual Conference being held in Washington, DC, many librarians who would not normally have had the chance to participate in advocacy day were able to do so. Over 40 library supporters joined over 1,600 library advocates on Capital Hill on July 15<sup>th</sup> to make their voices heard in support of federal funding for libraries.

Rally attendees enjoyed rousing speeches from ALA President Camila Alire, best-selling young adult author Lauren Myracle, U.S. Senator Jack Reed, U.S. Representative Vernon Ehlers, and ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels.

After the rally, 32 Ohio delegates met with Moira Lenehan-Razzuri from U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown's office and told the story of Ohio libraries and the importance of federal funds and library-friendly policies. The Ohio delegates then broke up into smaller groups to meet with their members of congress across the Hill.

In addition to telling their libraries' stories, the group carried a message to support funding the Library Services and Technology Act at the amount of \$300 million in FY 2011, allowing the continued support for such projects as KnowItNow, the Libraries Connect Ohio databases, innovative grants to libraries around the state, services to the blind and physically disabled and statewide resource sharing. In addition, they asked to fund "Improving Literacy through School Libraries" at \$100 million and include a requirement in the ESEA Act reauthorization that all schools have a fully-funded school library with a full-time, state certified school librarian. Finally, the group asked Congress to support a free and open internet for all by voting in favor of Net Neutrality.

Library Advocacy doesn't begin or end with events like Library Advocacy Day, it needs to be done year round. Library advocates need to keep in contact with their legislators and maintain the lines of communication. Invite them to visit your library, offer services to them and their staff. Make sure they are aware that your staff can help them answer questions or provide meeting space for meetings with constituents in the district. Monitor legislation affecting libraries and send them a message when important votes are taking place. Remember, advocacy can't be done in just a day so keep on advocating!