

**AALL CASE STUDY:
MARYLAND WORKING GROUP STOPS ELIMINATION OF PRINT REGISTER**
March 2010

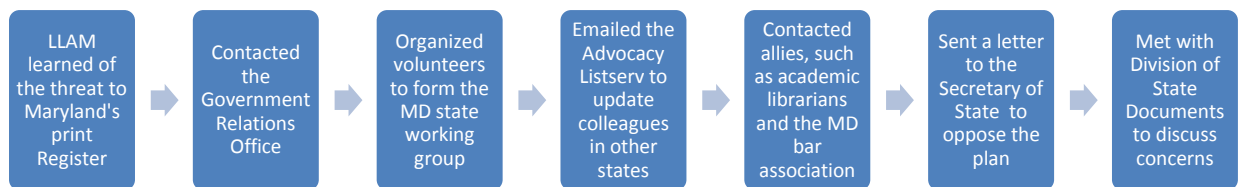
The Challenge

In November 2009, the Maryland Division of State Documents (DSD) of the Office of the Secretary of State announced its plan to discontinue the print publication of the Maryland Register. The [notice](#), which was released with no public comment period, specifically cited state budget reductions as the reason for the change in format. The move away from print to electronic access only is a growing trend nationwide as state officials try to save costs in the face of budget cuts.

The notice of the proposed plan demonstrated the DSD's lack of understanding of the importance of publishing the print version of the Register until there is an electronic version that is digitally authenticated and that will be preserved for permanent public access. The plan would have created a new fee-based e-Subscription consisting of a biweekly email with a PDF attachment of each issue of the Register. The e-Subscriptions would be priced for single-users only and sent to one email address for individual use. Subscribers would be barred from making copies or otherwise sharing the PDF, so libraries would not be able to provide public access at all.

With an original effective date of January 4, 2010, it was necessary for Maryland's law librarians to act quickly to ensure continued access to the print Register. This case study looks at the steps that Joan Bellistri, Chair of the Law Library Association of Maryland's (LLAM) Government/Vendor Relations Committee, and other Maryland law librarians took to form AALL's first [state working group](#), and how they opposed this misguided plan.

LLAM/Maryland Working Group's Response



Learned of the threat to the Register and contacted the AALL Government Relations Office

Catching the register notice immediately, Joan Bellistri and Steve Anderson, Director of the Maryland State Law Library, quickly contacted Mary Alice Baish, Director of the AALL Government Relations Office (GRO), for help. Mary Alice suggested that they organize a group of Maryland law librarians from court, county, academic and firm libraries to oppose the plan.

Joan contacted Janet Camillo, Chair of the Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors, and Joanne Colvin, President of LLAM, to tell them about the problem and ask for their assistance. She also recruited several more volunteers from different types of law libraries to form the new working group. Joan also asked a representative from the Maryland Library

Association (MLA) to participate in the working group. LLAM and MLA have a long history of working together on policy issues of importance to Maryland's librarians.

Alerted colleagues in other states through the Advocacy Listserv and reached out to allies

Joan also emailed the [AALL Advocacy Listserv](#) to inform law librarians in other states about the problem they were facing in Maryland and alert them to possible similar developments in their own states. Joan agreed to keep the Listserv updated so that colleagues in other states could track their progress.

The working group's immediate goal was to delay or stop the proposed plan. In order to ensure broad support for their position, the Maryland Working Group reached out to members of the government documents community, academic libraries and the Maryland State Bar Association, who understood the problem and were receptive to helping.

Sent a letter to the Secretary of State to oppose the plan

In December 2009, members of the working group, joined by the Maryland Library Association, sent a [letter](#) to John P. McDonough, the Secretary of State of Maryland, to express their concerns about the elimination of the print Register and the lack of plans to authenticate, preserve and provide permanent public access to the electronic version.

Chief Judge Robert M. Bell also sent a letter to Secretary McDonough describing his concerns about the proposed plan. In his response, Secretary McDonough indicated that he understood the concerns and announced that the DSD will no longer sell subscriptions to the Register. In addition, the PDF will be available on the DSD's Web site and through a free email subscription. Subscribers will also be permitted to forward the Register to others, and anybody may print a copy for noncommercial use.

Met with officials at DSD to discuss their concerns

In other good news, Joan and Steve Anderson were invited to join a small working group to discuss the implementation of the new policy with the DSD. At the end of January, the DSD held a meeting with members of the working group, which also included representatives from the Department of Legislative Services, the State Archives, and the Governor's office. During the meeting, the DSD told the working group that they would continue to produce a small number of print copies of the Register and offer print subscriptions to libraries. DSD officials also stated that they are still considering how many past PDF issues will remain available on the Web site, either six months or a year.

Official notice has not yet been published in the Maryland Register, but the target date for these changes to take place is May 2010.

The Maryland State Working Group will continue to monitor this important issue, and we will keep this case study updated as we learn more details about the new plan.