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## The AALL Washington E-Bulletin

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## **TAKE ACTION NOW**

### **Act Now to Endorse Transparency Recommendations for the Next President!**

[OMB Watch](#) is looking for organizations and individuals to endorse [transparency recommendations](#) for the next president! AALL has signed on, and we encourage chapters and members to [review the draft report](#) and [sign on](#). After eight years of fighting policies that promoted government secrecy, now is the time to support a proactive agenda for government transparency!

By signing on, you agree to the following statement:

We, the undersigned, support the principles of government openness as articulated in the recommendations generated by the 21st Century Right to Know project, although not all of us agree on every recommendation. With a new presidential administration and a new Congress taking office in 2009, we believe there is a great opportunity, and great need, to increase government transparency. We hope these recommendations contribute to that important work.

OMB Watch needs endorsements as soon as possible so that the next president's transition team will see the broad support for transparency from our community and others who believe in government transparency. Please [sign on](#) today!

#### **Background:**

In July 2007, representatives of approximately thirty organizations, including AALL, met for a two-day conference organized by OMB Watch and OpenTheGovernment.org to kick off what became known as the 21st Century Right to Know project. The goal of the conference was to begin to develop transparency recommendations for the next president. Following this brainstorming session, OMB Watch held a series of interviews with experts as well as listening sessions around the country, in which many law librarians participated. Following these information-gathering sessions, OMB Watch developed a draft set of [transparency recommendations](#).

The draft report includes more than sixty recommendations and covers three main areas: National Security and Secrecy, Usability of Government Information, and Creating a Government Environment for Transparency. It also includes recommendations for the new

president's first 100 days and for a long-term vision to strengthen government openness. The report covers many issues important to law librarians, and we hope that you'll consider endorsing the report.

## **UPDATES FROM THE HILL AND THE WASHINGTON OFFICE**

### **As Congress Enters Lame Duck Session, AALL Looks Ahead**

On the last day of Fiscal Year 2008, President Bush signed [H.R. 2638](#), the *Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009*, to ensure continued funding for the federal government through the March 6, 2009. This means that funding for agencies such as the Government Printing Office, the Law Library of Congress and the National Archives and Records Administration will remain at 2008 levels through March 6, 2009. After passing this Continuing Resolution, Congress temporarily adjourned on October 3. Both Houses are now back for "lame duck" sessions, where the main focus of attention is on bailing out the financial sector.

As the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress comes to a close, we are busy looking ahead to the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. A central priority for us for us will be to work with the staff of [Rep. Zoe Lofgren](#) (D-CA-16) and the American Bar Association to increase support for the [Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Improvement and Modernization Act](#). This bill, originally introduced on July 23, 2008 by Rep. Lofgren, would provide additional funding for the Law Library of Congress, authorize a separate line item for the Law Library, and establish the Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Support Program, which will allow outside funding to be raised and provided to the Law Library for new enhanced services. Just as we asked for your help over the last several months in getting additional support for the bill in the House, we'll be looking to you next session to help us get the bill introduced in the Senate. As always, we greatly appreciate your efforts to make your voices heard on the Hill!

### **Highlights from the Fall Depository Conference and Meeting**

From October 20 through October 22, the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) held the [Fall DLC Conference & Meeting](#) in Arlington, VA. Presentation documents are available [here](#).

During the Plenary Session: Council/GPO Welcome and Kick-Off, Public Printer Robert G. Tapella graciously welcomed members of the Depository Library Council, including AALL members Victoria Trotta and Sarah Holterhoff, and the more than four hundred attendees. He noted that the Federal Digital System will be launched in January 2009 and that new releases, with added enhancements, would occur every 6-8 months. In regards to the GPO Study of Regional Depositories, [Regional Depository Libraries in the 21st Century: A Time for Change?](#), he said he would share the recommendations with members of the Joint Committee on Printing in November. He also announced that one of the themes for the Spring Depository Library Council meeting would be the GPO regionals report.

Acting Superintendent of Documents Richard Davis also warmly welcomed attendees. He noted that despite the current continuing resolution that will fund most agencies through March 6, 2009 at FY 2008 levels, there would be no cutbacks to the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). He reminded depository librarians to submit comments about the [Value of the FDLP](#). He also reiterated the fact that GPO is still in the electronic transition, and that while 97% of titles in the FDLP are digital, they must also be official and authentic. GPO is running a beta-test of authenticated online House and Senate bills. All bills will be digitally signed and authenticated starting with the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. During the questions and answer period, Acting Washington Affairs Representative Mary Alice Baish publicly commended GPO for their national leadership and successful efforts in authenticating online government information. Mr. Davis announced the temporary suspension of the PACER pilot project due to a security breach that is under investigation. The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts remains committed to continuing the pilot once the investigation has been completed.

Also during this session, GPO named California's [Law Library for San Bernardino County](#) as the [2008 Federal Depository Library of the Year](#)! The Honorable Keith D. Davis, President of the library's Board of Trustees, accepted the award along with Law Library Director and former GRC member Larry Meyer and reference librarian George Carter. In accepting the award, Larry emphasized the recognition the award conveys specifically to the Law Library for San Bernardino County as well as the importance of publicly accessible county law libraries to the FDLP.

The meeting ended with a session that had been scheduled to address the Council's Recommendations to the Public Printer. However, because of the apparent need to attend to the vision and mission of the FDLP, the Council did not offer recommendations and instead used

this time to articulate goals. The new goals were met with general consensus. The new goals are to develop new service models, new collection models, and new communication programs.

## **EPA Reopens Libraries, Calls for Comments on Information Access Strategy**

On the last day of September, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reopened its regional libraries in Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, and the EPA Headquarters Repository and Chemical Library in Washington, DC. On October 23, EPA held an open house at the reopened Headquarters and Chemical Library. EPA Chief Information Officer Molly O'Neill delivered a short address, and EPA staff offered tours around the new space. We are pleased that the libraries have finally reopened and we are grateful to Congress for holding hearings on this issue and for providing EPA with a [\\$1 million order](#) (see page 35) to reopen the libraries.

In an effort that demonstrates EPA's effort to engage users, the agency is asking for comments on its [Draft Information Access Strategy](#), a report based on comments submitted to EPA online and in person since April as part of the [National Dialogue on Access to Environmental Information](#). The draft includes recommendations for improving access to environmental information. It is [available for comment](#) until November 14, 2008. We encourage those law librarians who use EPA materials to provide comments.

## **Expert Committee Releases E- Rulemaking Recommendations**

The Committee on the Status and Future of Federal E-Rulemaking has released an important report to Congress and the President on the future of E-Rulemaking, [Achieving the Potential: The Future of Federal E-rulemaking](#). The report is the result of the collaborative work of a diverse set of experts, including Sally Katzen, former Administrator of the [Office of Information and Regulatory Policy \(OIRA\)](#), and AALL member Barbara Brandon, a long-time advocate of improving the federal e-rulemaking process who has spoken about the regulatory process at several AALL Annual Meetings. AALL is among a dozen organizations that have endorsed the report.

The Committee's recommendations include: developing an improved architecture based on open standards; identifying a single agency to implement the new architecture; establishing common data and metadata standards; securing dedicated funding to the lead agency for developing and maintaining the core e-rulemaking system; making the online docket the authoritative rulemaking record for all agencies; and redesigning [Regulations.gov](#) to emphasize public access.

AALL supports these recommendations, which would make it easier for the public to follow and participate in the regulatory process. This report might make a noteworthy addition to your law library collection and if you're interested, we encourage you to download it [here](#).

## **OUTSIDE THE BELTWAY: CHAPTER NEWS**

If you have news on policy or legislative issues in your AALL Chapter, please [let us know](#). News might address legislation you are tracking, events your chapter is hosting, or anything you think might be of interest to our community. We'd love to hear from you!

### **LLAGNY and SNELLA to Hold Events on Digital Authentication**

The [Law Library Association of Greater New York](#) (LLAGNY) will hold an [event](#) on Thursday, November 6 to address AALL's work on authentication and the state of authentication in New York. The event will feature Mary Alice Baish, AALL's Acting Washington Affairs Representative; Gary D. Spivey, NY State Reporter; James W. Leary, Attorney, New York State Department of State, Office of General Counsel; and Anita Postyn, who was responsible for assembling the initial New York State information for the AALL's authentication report. The event will be moderated by David Badertscher, a member of AALL's [Electronic Legal Information Access and Citation Committee](#) (ELIACC). This expert set of panelists promises to provide an excellent forum for discussion of authentication in New York and AALL's efforts to address this issue.

The [Southern New England Law Librarians Association](#) (SNELLA) will hold an [event](#) at the Connecticut State Library on Monday, November 10 titled, "How Reliable Is It?: The Danger of Paperless." This event will feature a discussion of digital authentication with Acting Washington Affairs Representative Mary Alice Baish and Darcy Kirk, Associate Dean for Library and Technology at the University of Connecticut School of Law Library and a member of the Connecticut Working Group for Electronic Access to Regulations. AALL Government Relations Chair Steve Mirsky of the Connecticut State Library will join Mary Alice and Darcy in a discussion of how chapters can become more involved in legislative advocacy. We hope those of you in the area will be able to attend these events!

## **FREE TIME WELL SPENT: Further Reading for the Information Policy Junkie**

### **Federal Agencies Launch Digitization Initiative**

The [Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative](#) is a collaborative effort by a dozen federal agencies formed originally as a group under the [National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program](#) (NDIIPP) to define common guidelines, methods, and practices to digitize historical content in a sustainable manner. The Initiative includes two working groups: The [Federal Agencies Still Image Digitization Working Group](#) and the [Federal Agencies Audio-Visual Working Group](#). Two draft documents by the Still Image Digitization Working Group have been released for public review and comment: [TIFF Image Metadata](#) and [Digital Imaging Framework](#). Comments are due by November 15.

### **General Services Administration Experiments with Social Media**

The General Services Administration (GSA) has been a pioneer in using social media to provide information in innovative ways, through social media tools like the [GovGab blog](#), [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Teresa Navarro Nasif, Director of the Federal Citizen Information Center at the Office of Citizen Services at GSA, spoke about GSA's creative efforts to provide information to the public during the [Fall DLC conference](#). Her slides are available [here](#). If you have thoughts about GSA's experiments with social media, you can let them know through their [Survey on Government Usage of Social Media](#).

### **Government Computer News Article on Electronic Preservation**

*Government Computer News* featured an in depth [article](#) this month about the need for federal government agency IT departments to preserve electronic records. The article highlights the need for agencies to preserve all records, including Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, blogs and instant messages.

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