

Your Involvement Makes a Difference

By Mary Alice Baish

During the past two years, with *your* strong support, AALL achieved many victories on the policy front. Our community responded with enthusiasm to the message in the December 2006 *Members' Briefing*, titled "AALL's Winning Advocacy Team." The article introduced you to our groundbreaking 2007 *State by State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources* and looked ahead to the legislative opportunities we would face during the 110th Congress. I challenged more of our chapters and members to join our advocacy team and am happy to report that they certainly did! Here's a quick recap of a few of our successes in 2007-2008.

- AALL hosted a National Summit on Authentic Legal Information in the Digital Age in April 2007 that made us the national leader on this important issue. As a result of our efforts, the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) launched a collection of online *Authenticated Public and Private Laws of the 110th Congress* and recently added digital signatures to online congressional bills. In addition, the Uniform Law Commission created a new Study Committee on Online Authentication of Legal Materials last August to investigate the issues and discuss the feasibility of a uniform law or model act on digital authentication.
- The *Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Improvement and Modernization Act of 2008* was introduced to improve funding for the Law Library of Congress.
- The enactment of the *Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National Government Act of 2007* strengthened the *Freedom of Information Act*.
- Congress issued a 2007 order and \$1 million to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reopen all five of the libraries the agency shut down in 2006.

These victories took years to achieve and were possible only through the combined efforts of the AALL Executive Board, our policy committees, the Government Relations Office, and our very committed members. We have never hesitated to set the bar high for our policy agenda, and by working together, we have proven that AALL is a national leader on information policy.

"AALL continues to demonstrate groundbreaking leadership in the area of authentication of digital publications. Their *State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources* and their national summit continue to be referenced as the source of authentication practices across the U.S. Furthermore, AALL's support for authentication development efforts at the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) has been outstanding, adding needed credibility, which has allowed us to make great progress."

—Michael Wash, CIO at the Government Printing Office

The Executive Board Determines AALL Policy

Our Executive Board signaled its strong support for our advocacy efforts by making advocacy one of the three pillars of our 2005-2010 Strategic Directions. The board has sole authority in determining AALL's Government Relations Policy (www.aallnet.org/about/policy_government.asp). First approved by the Board in 1990, this policy defines the positions we take on issues related to access to government information and copyright, privacy and civil liberties, and intellectual freedom.

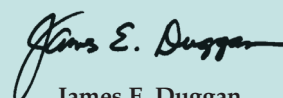
Advocacy and You: Take the Time to Make a Difference

When was the last time you called your congressperson? Sent your senator an e-mail? Mailed a letter to your state representative? We all talk about the issues, but how many of us have the time to actually do something about them? Very few of us can launch a full campaign to propose new legislation, become proficient in the ways of Washington, or even monitor a bill that is being considered in your state assembly. That's why I am grateful for the efforts of our Government Relations Office staff, who advocate for issues every day on behalf of all AALL members.

Nearly 19 years ago the AALL Executive Board approved the recommendations of the Special Committee on National Information Policy, which 1) proposed the adoption of a government relations policy and 2) proposed the creation of the Washington representative office (see Frank G. Houdek, *The First Century: 100 Years of AALL History*, 112, Buffalo: W.S. Hein & Co., 2008). Since then, AALL has worked tirelessly to advocate for information policy issues of concern to our members. In 2008, the Executive Board approved the renaming of the Washington Affairs Office to the Government Relations Office and named Mary Alice Baish as director.

Mary Alice and Emily Feldman, advocacy communications assistant, are the key personnel in advancing AALL's legislative agenda, but they can't do it alone. Three important AALL committees (Government Relations, Copyright, and Electronic Legal Information Access and Citation) work to develop and support policy in their respective areas, and government relations committees of many AALL chapters provide regional, state-wide, and local assistance with important issues.

However, each of us can do our part in a few simple ways: subscribe to the AALL Advocacy online discussion list and receive informational updates and actions alerts from the Government Relations Office; monitor the AALL Washington Blawg (<http://aallwash.wordpress.com>), which covers policy issues, events, news, and resources relevant to the law library community (you can subscribe through RSS or Feedburner via e-mail); and act when you get an alert, e.g., telephone, write, or e-mail your representatives when called upon, and let them know how you feel about pending legislation. This is democracy in action, and being an informed and active AALL member helps not only the Association, but also the greater population. Plus, I'd be grateful!



James E. Duggan
AALL President, 2008-2009

It has been amended several times by the board, either to provide an explicit statement about a particular position we have taken or to incorporate new guidelines into the policy. For example, the Board endorsed a 2004 resolution opposing the reauthorization of Sec. 215 (the so-called library provision) of the *USA PATRIOT Act* and copies were hand delivered to key members of Congress.

In spring 2007, the board incorporated into our policy the "Principles and Core Values Concerning Public Information on Government Web Sites," developed by the Access to Electronic Legal Information Committee. These important principles related to the accessibility, authentication, official status, comprehensiveness, and preservation of online government information and play an important role in shaping our policy agenda and legislative work.

The Government Relations Office

Emily Feldman, advocacy communication assistant since November 2007, and I are the public face of AALL here in Washington. We represent you on Capitol Hill, with federal agency officials, with other like-minded organizations, and with our numerous coalitions. We carefully monitor legislation and play a role in drafting bills. Much time and effort is also spent on negotiating, supporting, or killing a bill. We draft letters, in consultation with our policy committees, based on the positions defined in the Government Relations Policy. In recent years, three AALL presidents—Janis Johnston, Ann Fessenden, and Sally Holterhoff—have been invited to testify before Congress. I have built strong relationships with Hill staff from key committees and have testified twice in support of the Government Printing Office's annual budget request.

Developing these long-term relationships is one of the keys to successful advocacy. It's also why we strongly encourage our chapters and members to build close relationships with your legislative staff both here in Washington and in your state capital. The goal is to become the person whom staff turns to first whenever they have a question about any of your issues.

Click on the "Government Relations Office" button on AALLNET to learn

everything you always wanted to know about our work or to browse through the letters, testimonies, reports, and presentations we've made going back to 1995. While there, please take a moment to subscribe to the Washington Blawg. That way, you'll receive updates from our office through RSS feeds or e-mail.

You can also join our Advocacy online discussion list, which will keep you in the loop and give you an opportunity to share information with us about what's happening in your own state or to read the latest monthly Washington E-Bulletin. You'll also find our new "Advocacy Toolkit for the 111th Congress," which explains the ABCs of advocacy work and the many ways in which our members and chapters can join our advocacy team.

AALL's Dedicated Policy Committees

I serve as staff liaison to the Copyright Committee, the Electronic Legal Information Access and Citation Committee (ELIACC), and the Government Relations Committee (GRC). Each plays a unique and important role. They have responsibility for advising us on policy matters within their jurisdiction; implementing actions to achieve the objectives of our Strategic Directions; and educating our membership about important issues through their Web presence, publications, and the many excellent programs they sponsor at our Annual Meetings. Each committee holds

monthly conference calls, and their members work very hard on your behalf. Here's a brief summary of each committee's charge and current activities. To learn more about them, check out their Web sites on AALLNET by clicking on the "Committees" button.

The **Government Relations Committee (GRC)** plays the crucial role of monitoring "all federal and state legislative, regulatory, and judicial developments, with the exception of copyright issues, that may affect the Association." In addition, GRC members serve as liaisons with all our chapters and SISs. In that role, they regularly share information items and calls for action with our broader membership. This year, GRC Chair Steve Mirsky has set a goal to energize subscribers to the Advocacy online discussion list so that we'll learn from our members about important issues percolating at the state level. Through the list, we learned of an open records law that recently took effect in Pennsylvania. We also found out about a 2008 New Jersey bill that would have eliminated all print distribution through the state depository program. Now other law librarians will be on the watch for a bill in their own states to move to an all-online depository program, which, given the economic crisis state governments are facing, may well be proposed.

The **Copyright Committee**, chaired this year by Keith Ann Stiverson, represents AALL's interests on copyright and



other intellectual property issues and, according to its charge, "shall coordinate with the Government Relations Office to testify or otherwise communicate Association views on copyright and other intellectual property issues to all levels of government." The committee has been involved in our efforts over the past four years to negotiate a new law on "orphan works" that would allow libraries to digitize and provide access to copyrighted works when the copyright owner cannot be found. This spring committee members are busy drafting updates to post on the Web site about fair use in the digital age, orphan works, licensing, and the Georgia State University lawsuit brought by publishers opposed to the university policy on e-reserves. They're also gearing up to make this the year that the orphan works bill is enacted.

The **ELIAC Committee**, chaired by Linda Defendeifer, "serves to advance the law library profession's principles concerning public information provided on government web sites and to promote uniformity in citation reform." It was created by the Executive Board last year by merging the former Access to Electronic Legal Information Committee with the Citation Formats Committees. This is a good match because the new committee has refocused on AALL's commitment to a public domain citation system as a key component of the life cycle management of electronic legal information. The committee is currently involved in writing a white paper on our past citation efforts that will include a roadmap for our future actions. They are also working with volunteers in each state to update the state profiles from the *2007 State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources* so that we can track progress in the states to make their online legal resources official and authentic.

Crucial Advocacy Role of Our Chapters and Members

"All politics is local" and we often call on specific chapters and members to support our work by sending letters or making phone calls to their congressional delegation. There are several recent examples where your letters and phone calls made a big impression on Capitol Hill. During the 110th Congress, more than a dozen

chapters helped us out, although we probably called most often on our three California chapters Northern California Association of Law Libraries (NOCALL), Southern California Association of Law Libraries (SCALL), and San Diego Area Law Libraries (SANDALL). In January 2007, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) became chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works, which has oversight over the EPA, and we needed her help.

Actually, I first learned of the closure of EPA libraries when a firm librarian wrote that the regional library in Chicago had been shut down with no advance notice. Other concerned members who rely on EPA reports and materials, often on a daily basis, alerted us to the extent of the closures. Our California chapters and members responded to our request to share "stories" with Sen. Boxer about the impact of the closures on their legal research, leading her to include the library closures as part of a February 2007 EPA oversight hearing.

Do you see how important your efforts are and what a difference you can make? Thanks to the combined voices of librarians, law professors, environmental advocacy groups, and members of the public, Congress understood the importance of EPA resources. In a clear victory for us, all five of the closed EPA libraries are now re-opened and staffed with professional librarians.

AALL chapters and members also came through for us in building support for the *Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Improvement and Modernization Act* (H.R. 6589). In October 2007, then-AALL President Ann Fessenden and colleagues from the American Bar Association testified in support of improved funding for the Law Library of Congress at a House Administration Committee hearing. Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) and her staff worked diligently with me and ABA staff through five drafts of the bill, which was finally introduced last July. At the mark-up hearing, Rep. Lofgren

proudly noted in her remarks that she had received a letter from NOCALL praising her work and the importance of her legislation. Law librarians also responded overwhelmingly to our action alert asking for calls and letters to every member of the committee the week before the hearing. It was clear during the hearing that many committee members had heard from you. Never underestimate how important *your* voice is with your elected representatives!

Your Help Needed to Reach Our Ambitious Policy Goals

Change has come to Washington with the inauguration of President Barack Obama. There is a new commitment

to promote a more open, accountable, and participatory federal government. We worked with other open government organizations for a year and a half to develop the report titled "Moving Toward a 21st Century Right-to-Know Agenda: Recommendations to President-elect Obama and Congress." AALL endorsed the report, as did nine of our chapters, our Government Relations Committee and Technical Services Special Interest Section, and 75 of our members. What a great team effort!



2007-2008 AALL Past President Ann Fessenden and colleagues from the American Bar Association testified in support of improved funding for the Law Library of Congress.

President Obama has taken its recommendations very seriously. His second executive order, E.O. 13489, revoked former President Bush's E.O. 13233 on presidential records, which had granted current and former presidents and vice presidents greatly expanded authority to withhold presidential records. Also on his first day in office, President Obama issued a memorandum on the *Freedom of Information Act* and one on transparency and open government. These memos also reflect top recommendations of the 21st Century Right-to-Know report.

In December, we submitted our own "Statement to the Obama-Biden Transition Team on the Public Policy Positions of AALL." I led the drafting effort in close consultation and



Mary Alice Baish, director of the Government Relations Office, and Emily Feldman, advocacy communications assistant, in front of the U.S. Capitol.

collaboration with members of our policy committees who contributed to its content and helped prioritize our goals. The statement is based on the key components of our Government Relations Policy. In effect, it defines our priorities for the next few years, which

include our ambitious goals for no-fee public access to PACER and a public domain citation system for federal court opinions and other legal information. To read more about the new culture of openness in Washington and specific recommendations from our statement, turn to the "Washington Brief" column on page 6 of this issue of *AALL Spectrum*. Having set such an ambitious agenda, we *all* now need to work together more effectively than ever before.

Last, but far from least, Emily and I would like to extend to each of you a personal invitation to participate in AALL's 2009 Day on the Hill on July 24. Jointly sponsored by the Government Relations Committee and our office, we'll use the morning to teach you the tricks of the trade to become an effective advocate and the messages we need you to deliver to your legislators. Armed with your new knowledge and skills, you'll spend the afternoon in meetings with your congressional delegation and their staff.

Contact Emily today at ejf33@law.georgetown.edu to register. What could be more fun? For those of you unable to attend this summer's meeting, please visit our Web site, sign up for our many informational resources, and, when you receive that next action alert from our office, please send an e-mail or pick up

"Participating in AALL's first Day on the Hill in 1999 was an exciting and memorable experience. After a morning of advocacy training, several AALL colleagues and I made our way around Capitol Hill that muggy July afternoon for meetings we had arranged with Congressional staffers and with my 1st District Indiana representative himself. We had a brief but meaningful chance to make some key points...and we came away feeling that, by explaining our views as law librarians, we'd participated in a small way in information policy-making."

—2006-2007 AALL Past President
Sally Holterhoff

the phone to deliver our message to your senators or representative. *You* can and will make a difference. Thank you!

Mary Alice Baish, director of the AALL Government Relations Office, Edward B. Williams Law Library, 111 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001-1417
• 202/662-9200 • Fax: 202/662-4059
• E-mail: Baish@law.georgetown.edu
• www.aallnet.org/aallwash.

The Top 10 Reasons Why You Should Join Our Advocacy Team

10. There is truly an advocacy role, large or small, for every AALL member, and sometimes all it takes is a few phone calls or e-mail messages to a government official to swing the balance in our favor on an issue that will benefit law libraries.
9. Becoming an AALL advocate means "being in the loop." You can easily track issues that affect our profession by taking advantage of the many communications tools from the Government Relations Office.
8. Real benefits for your library and its users have resulted from AALL's efforts to promote balance in copyright law and permanent public access to authentic online legal information.
7. Skills you'll develop advocating for a policy issue can be adapted easily for use within your own institution to address the needs of your library and users.
6. Public participation in government is at an all-time high, so it's important that law librarians speak up and impact our elected officials' decisions.
5. Law librarians are naturals at advocacy because they are knowledgeable, articulate, and able to organize information and explain complex issues in an easy to understand way.
4. "All politics is local"—elected officials listen carefully to their constituents, and they are accountable to you.
3. Developing a working relationship with your elected officials or their staff makes them aware of law libraries as a valuable resource and willing to listen to you when important information issues are under consideration.
2. AALL's ambitious policy goals cannot be achieved by a small staff and only a few members—"it takes a village" and solid support from all sectors of our membership.
1. Being an active member of AALL's advocacy team is challenging, rewarding, and, believe it or not, fun.