April 22, 2014

Dear Senator or Representative,

Thank you from the Florida Library Association (FLA) and its 900+ members for your support of our nation's libraries. I am writing to ask your support for libraries and library issues as part of National Library Legislative Day, May 5 and 6, 2014, sponsored by the American Library Association.

Innovation and change are sweeping through Florida libraries as they are transitioning to community hubs that provide learning environments, community engagement, and content creation! University libraries are working with faculty to publish their work in online repositories then making that valuable investment available to Floridians and the world. Colleges are working with students to insure that they have the technology and electronic information skills necessary in our modern work force. School libraries staffed with school media specialists are helping students master 21st Century Information Literacy Skills that they will need for success. Public libraries are providing the public with computers and technology training, making available popular ebooks, assisting job seekers, facilitating adult literacy, and continuing their important emergent literacy work, helping young children develop early learning skills necessary for success in school.

Key Federal Library Issues Critical for Floridians and Libraries

Level Fund the Library Services & Technology Act Funding (LSTA) - LSTA benefits Floridians through essential services including statewide services like the Florida Electronic Library (flelibrary.org) and grants to local communities. Services include:

- Florida Electronic Library's licensed information products
- Technology training
- Early learning programs
- Florida's youth program
- Literacy programs
- E-Government services training
- Digitization of culture resources
- Outreach to persons with special needs

LSTA, the only federal program solely for libraries is administered nationally by the Institute of Library and Museum Services (IMLS) and is funded through the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies budget. LSTA is administered in Florida by the Department of State's Division of Library and Information Services. Florida's LSTA 2014 allocation is $7,967,170, down 11% from $8,976,669 in 2010. Please level fund LSTA for 2015.

Support School Libraries Through Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL)! - By law at least half of IAL funding must be allocated as competitive grants for underserved school libraries and the remainder is allocated through competitive grants for national non-profit organizations to improve childhood literacy. Please level fund IAL at $25 million for 2015.
Support the E-Rate Program - Florida libraries and schools received $119,642 in E-Rate funding commitments for 2012 (the last year for which complete information is available) that helps them pay for the exploding need for Internet service! We strongly support the "Modernizing the E-Rate" proposal currently being considered by the FCC.

Support Open Access - Oppose Section 303 of the Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science and Technology Act (FIRST) - Great progress is in reach for ensuring that the public has free access to the published results of taxpayer funded scholarly research. Section 303 of FIRST creates unnecessary challenges to agencies as they endeavor to follow the White House Directive on Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research and delays progress made in the FY14 Omnibus Appropriations Act to expand the NIH access program to include the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services.

Privacy - We are committed to protecting American's privacy rights including privacy for private communications therefore we support the USA Freedom Act (H.R. 3361 / S. 1599). This legislation would end bulk collection of telephone and Internet metadata and permit companies to report publicly on the number of FISA orders and National Security Letters they have received and complied with and the number of users whose information is sought.

Net Neutrality - Libraries are very dependent on the open Internet for receiving and providing content, applications, and services as are schools, colleges, and universities. We encourage Congress to adopt legislation to restore net neutrality.

Copyright - Currently we are not taking positions on any specific copyright legislation but we strongly support the rights of Americans and libraries by the U. S. Copyright Law's fair use exemption. Fair use is essential to ensure the exchange of copyrighted information.

Support National Historical Publications and Records Commission Grants (NHPRC) - The grants benefit Florida's archives and historical groups, enabling them to preserve and publish historical records that document American and Florida history, and make historical information more accessible.

Funding for Other Library Programs - Fully fund the Library of Congress, the Government Printing Office, and the National Archives and Records Administration.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Florida and this great country of ours. We respectfully ask that you keep the requests from the library community in mind as you decide on these issues.

Sincerely,

Gladys Roberts, President
Florida Library Association