

## Legal Action Taken in Library Advocacy

This message is to inform Florida Library Association members about recent legal action by the Association to advocate for librarians and for quality library service throughout Florida.

The Executive Board of the Florida Library Association has voted to intervene in a lawsuit filed against the Florida Division of Library and Information Services by Library Systems & Services (LSSI). The suit challenges a proposed amendment to State Aid Program Guidelines which requires the head of a public library be a full-time employee of the single administrative unit.

The FLA Executive Board voted to engage the law firm of Lewis, Longman & Walker to represent FLA in this matter and to use reserve funds for this purpose. Attorneys Chris Lyon, who is also FLA's lobbyist, and Walter Forehand will handle the case.

FLA's Petition to Intervene has been filed with and accepted by the hearing officer. It includes the following points:

- The proposed change to the eligibility requirements for State Aid to Libraries grants has the potential to affect library budgets and, therefore, current and future employment opportunities at Florida libraries.
- FLA's mission and purpose include promoting excellence in all types of library service in Florida. It is FLA's position that excellence is promoted when a library is managed and coordinated by a full-time library professional.

The case will be decided by a hearing officer in Tallahassee at the Division of Administrative Hearings, and the final hearing will be held on October 8, 2009 at 9:30 AM. A copy of FLA's petition may be viewed at <http://www.doah.state.fl.us/docdoc/2009/004289/09004289M-082609-15515351.PDF> and a copy of all documents filed so far is at <http://www.doah.state.fl.us/internet/search/docket.cfm?CaseNo=09-004289>.

FLA President Wendy Breeden will appoint an *ad hoc* committee to assist with this issue. Charlie Parker, FLA Past President and current Chairman of its Legislative Committee, will lead the *ad hoc* committee.

The Florida Library Association is a not-for-profit corporation with over 1,000 members, including libraries and library cooperatives, library professionals and employees, library support groups and library-related businesses. FLA is the largest and primary advocacy group for libraries and library-related issues in the Florida.

Thank you for being a part of and supporting the Florida Library Association.

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