



LEGISLATIVE REPORT – August 19, 2017

Wisconsin Valley Library Service Board of Trustees

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STATE BUDGET UPDATE

- The budget process is still stalled past the July 1 deadline over different Senate and Assembly approaches to education and transportation funding, as well as the Foxconn incentives deal.
- A Joint Finance Committee executive session has not yet been scheduled for the Department of Public Instruction budget.
- **WLA's government relations advisor, Steve Conway, is monitoring library interests and continues to advise us to "keep calm and sit tight."**

The Senate released a budget proposal on July 18 as a push to get the two sides moving together.

- It provides insight into what changes may be proposed by Senate JFC members once the impasse is resolved and JFC takes up the DPI budget in Executive Session.
- The Senate proposal included the \$1.5 million increase for system aids and maintained support for core statewide library services (BadgerLink, Newsline for the Blind and state resource contracts).
- It also deleted current law (43.24 (6), Wis. Stats.) requiring DPI to include in its budget request for public library system aid an amount equal to 13% of the prior year operating expenditures from local and county sources. Current appropriation is around 6.3%.
- Including 13% index elimination by Senate leadership in its proposal to break the impasse makes it highly likely that the Joint Finance Committee will take up the change when the DPI budget is discussed.
- At the July 28 WLA legislative committee meeting, there was general consensus that the 13% index mandate precludes flexibility for DPI to request an amount reflecting fiscal and political reality. It also difficult for library advocates to explain. WLA is taking no position on 13% language at this time.

FEDERAL LIBRARY ISSUES

- **GOOD NEWS!** The House Appropriations Committee has approved level funding in FY2018 for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (\$231 million), including \$183 million for LSTA. Senate Appropriations work begins in September. Timing of budget consideration by the full House or Senate is increasingly uncertain.
- The bipartisan **Advancing Innovation and Reinvigorating Widespread Access to Viable Electromagnetic Spectrum (AIRWAVES) Act**, S. 1682 has been introduced. It would direct the Federal Communications Commission to free up unused or underused spectrum currently assigned to government users for commercial providers to expand their broadband offerings and support expansion of services like Wi-Fi, particularly in unserved and underserved areas.
- **ALA is also closely monitoring the issue of Network Neutrality** which is about online non-discrimination. Consumers/citizens should be free to access the Internet content and services they wish. Information providers—which may be websites, online services, etc., and who may be affiliated with traditional commercial enterprises, but who also may be individual citizens, libraries, schools, or nonprofit entities—should have essentially the same quality of access to distribute their offerings. Carriers should not be allowed to charge some information providers more money for the same service, or establish exclusive deals that relegate everyone else (including small noncommercial or startup entities) to an Internet "slow lane." This principle should hold true even when a broadband provider is providing Internet carriage to a competitor. **ALA Advocacy Updates at:** <http://www.districtdispatch.org/>