

## ALA 2010

### MID WINTER CONFERENCE REPORT

The mood in Boston could best be described as sober. 15% of all public libraries are reporting a decrease in operating hours. 13 states have reported closures of libraries and 24 states are reporting cuts in state aid up to a daunting 30%. Our level funding in RI looks pretty good.

ALA is attempting to gain traction on a proposal which could have a direct impact for us. JOBS FOR MAIN STREET would be a one-time \$650 million investment to create up to 13,000 jobs in libraries to focus on employment skills training for local communities. The funds would be distributed to states using a formula based 50% on population and 50% on unemployment rates. Funds would be limited to hiring back staff released due to budget cuts or for new staff to expand job searching services.

ALA's year has been rocky but the association is keeping its head above water. Layoffs, furlough days and operation and program reductions have allowed for a million dollar decrease in expenses. Membership is down slightly, 2.7% to 61,739.

LSTA reauthorization is still waiting to occur. Measures to be included are still being crafted. One intriguing idea would provide national funding to libraries for database access.

A RALLY FOR LIBRARIES is being planned for Capitol Hill, June 29, 2010, 11:00Am. All annual conference attendees and library supporters are encouraged to attend. After the rally each state will schedule afternoon visits with their congressional delegation. Registration is available at ALAWO [www.ala.org/LAD](http://www.ala.org/LAD)

Within the next week the ALA website will include information on how members and chapters can contribute funds for Haiti disaster relief.

During the closing session of Council a resolution was approved to support the Spectrum Presidential Initiative to raise \$1 million in 2010 to continue and to expand the diversity scholarship program established in 1998. Over 600 scholarships have been awarded and the program has certainly enriched our profession in Rhode Island. To kick off the campaign former ALA President, Betty Turock made a \$100,000 pledge to the initiative.

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ALA Councilor