



President's Report - Year in Review

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September 2024 to August 2025

This year as OLA President has been one of challenge, progress, and resilience for our association and for libraries across Oregon. We have navigated political uncertainty, fought for essential library protections, celebrated legislative wins, and built new connections that will strengthen our work for years to come.

Legislative & Advocacy Highlights

One of the most significant milestones of my presidency was the passage of HB1098, the "Freedom to Read" Bill. This vital legislation helps prevent book bans and other forms of censorship in Oregon public schools if the ban or censorship constitutes discrimination. It also offers greater support for school library staff facing challenges. Sponsored by Senator Lew Frederick (D-Portland), the bill was championed by dozens of OLA members who submitted written and in-person testimony. Our Legislative Committee was instrumental in moving this bill forward, with crucial guidance from our lobbyist, Cassie Bruske. Key partners including the ACLU, Basic Rights Oregon, and the Oregon Education Association worked alongside OLA to craft policy that reflects our shared values.

At the start of the 2025 session, OLA set three top priorities:

- Stable funding for the State Library.
- Passage of the "Freedom to Read" bill.
- Establishment of staffing support at ODE for school librarians.

Passage of HB1098 achieved two of these three goals. However, full funding for the State Library remains unresolved. With the federal budget (HR1) now passed, the State Library faces looming staffing cuts and loss of program funding beginning in FY2026, with loss of competitive grants occurring immediately. OLA will continue to lead advocacy efforts during the short session to secure necessary backfill funding, meeting

directly with lawmakers and mobilizing members to defend these vital resources. This fight is far from over.

National Engagement

In June 2025, I attended the ALA Annual Conference in Philadelphia, where I participated in the Chapter Leaders Forum. This gathering of state library association leaders provided valuable opportunities to exchange ideas on topics including dues structures, conference planning, and intellectual freedom advocacy. One promising area I am exploring for OLA is an affiliate membership model, in which a library district, system, or other organization could purchase memberships for all of their staff at a discounted rate. Potential benefits include reduced barriers to participation, increased engagement and volunteerism, and a stronger, more sustainable association.

This year I also attended the COSLA Voices for Libraries advocacy event in Washington, D.C. with OLA members and library leaders from across Oregon. We attended a valuable advocacy training and meetings in lawmakers' offices with OLA members and State Library staff.

Challenges & Resilience

My presidential year unfolded against a backdrop of instability: the layoff and partial restoration of IMLS staff, turmoil at the Library of Congress, ongoing threats to intellectual freedom, and budget uncertainty for libraries statewide. Yet we also saw new partnerships, creative problem-solving, and an unwavering commitment from our members. Through every challenge, OLA members have shown determination and hope, a combination I believe will carry us forward.

Conference & Member Engagement

We moved ahead with planning for the 2025 OLA Conference with flexibility in mind, ensuring the program meets members where they are. Our events including the President's Party at the Museum of Natural and Cultural History provided space for connection and celebration, even in the midst of a demanding year. I was delighted to award Kristen Curé and Jean Gritter with the President's Accomplice and President's Award respectively. We honored Ericka Brunson-Rochette with the OLA Past President Recognition. This spring, the OLA Board voted unanimously to add a Rainbow Round Table to OLA. We've moved away from Twitter and started a brand new BlueSky social media account to better connect with members. We opened a new high-yield savings account as a source of passive income.

Looking Ahead

As we head into the next year, OLA will:

- Lead a coordinated advocacy push for State Library funding.
- Continue supporting members in responding to censorship and access challenges.
- Explore and evaluate the potential of an affiliate membership model and an executive directorship.
- Strengthen our network of local, state, and national partnerships.

This year reminded me daily of why our work matters and who we do it for. Libraries are essential, and so are the people who make them thrive. Thank you for your trust, your engagement, and your willingness to stand up for Oregon libraries.