2017 National Library Legislative Day Priority

Support Strong “Net Neutrality” Protections

The American Library Association asks all Members of Congress to:

1) PRESERVE the core principles of network neutrality articulated in the FCC’s 2015 Open Internet Order, which protects free speech online, education, research, and innovation (see reverse).

2) ENDORSE the network neutrality framework adopted in the Open Internet Order to support the needs of libraries, consumers and higher education.

Why is this issue important for libraries and for the millions of patrons they serve?

- Libraries and librarians of every kind are dedicated to providing maximum and equitable access to information of all kinds. Accordingly, we are committed to preserving the unimpeded flow of information over the Internet – society’s primary open platform for information exchange, intellectual discourse, civic engagement, creativity, innovation, teaching, research and learning – and believe that equitable access to it is critical to our nation’s social, cultural, educational and economic well-being.

- The Open Internet Order enables libraries to fully serve the public by legally prohibiting Internet Service Providers (ISPs) from speeding or slowing selected Internet traffic, blocking access to certain web sites or applications, or otherwise discriminating against certain Internet services for commercial reasons.

- Commercial ISPs should operate their networks in a neutral manner without interfering with the transmission or content of Internet communications. Without the framework set forth by the FCC, however, nothing would require commercial ISPs to be neutral. They could act as gatekeepers to maximize profit.

- Replacing the clear legal protections of the Open Internet Order with unenforceable, voluntary net neutrality “rules” would threaten the high-bandwidth applications and services that enable real-time collaboration, content creation, sharing, and learning by educational and other community institutions, including libraries, which cannot afford to pay for prioritized access.

- ALA strongly supports the Open Internet Order because it ensures that libraries and our millions of users will not be consigned to the “slow” lane of the Internet. We urge Congress not to alter or eliminate it.