Government Relations Committee 2007-08

After AALL’s national summit on authentication of digital materials in April 2007, the Government Relations Committee (GRC) continued to track authentication issues in the states and communicate with stakeholders as appropriate. Thanks in part to AALL’s work, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws has formed a Study Committee on Authentication of Online State Legal Materials. The Government Printing Office also moved forward on authentication of the electronic slip laws from the 110th Congress.

The committee worked with the Washington Affairs Office staff to present the advocacy workshop held at the 2007 annual meeting: 40 participants attended the workshop and learned how to be strong advocates for law libraries and librarians.

GRC monitored many important legislative and administrative developments and worked with members in the Association’s various Chapters to contact legislators about issues important to the association. Each GRC member served as liaison to several Chapters and Special Interest Sections and was responsible for keeping those members informed and active in our advocacy efforts.

We worked on issues ranging from funding and the future of the Federal Depository Library Program to the status of the Law Library of Congress. President Fessenden testified before Congress in October on the operations of the Library of Congress, stressing the importance of the Law Library. In May, Acting Washington Affairs Representative Mary Alice Baish testified before Congress in support of fully funding the Government Printing Office’s budget request. As always, AALL members and Chapters played an invaluable role in our advocacy efforts; they made the calls, sent the letters, and remembered to thank the government officials who responded well to our priorities.

The committee received five nominations for the Public Access to Government Information (PAGI) Award, and after reviewing the nominations, recommended that OMB Watch receive the award in their 25th year working to promote open government. OMB Watch Executive Director Gary Bass will be the guest speaker at the Legislative and Regulatory Update in Portland, where he will be presented with the award.

The committee proposed the creation of a Member Advocacy Award to be presented to a AALL member for outstanding advocacy work in support of AALL’s goals. The Executive Board approved the creation of this award. The committee unanimously voted to award the first Member Advocacy Award to Robert L. Oakley.

GRC program proposals that were accepted are: the Advocacy Workshop, the “Annual Legislative/Regulatory Update” and “Explore the Secret Workings of the FISA Court.” Other policy committees and SISs have sponsored several policy programs as well, upholding the tradition of a strong track of policy programs at the Portland meeting.
GRC Members for 2007-08: Angela Baldree, Jennifer Behrens, Barbara Brandon, Paul Callister, Janet Fischer (Webmaster), Marlene Gebauer, Stephanie Hess, Larry Meyer, Steve Mirsky, Camilla Tubbs, and Sally Wambold. AALL President Ann Fessenden served as our Board Liaison and Mary Alice Baish, Acting Washington Affairs Representative, was our staff Liaison. Mary Alice was ably assisted by Emily Feldman whose enthusiasm and energy are a great addition to the Washington Affairs Office.

Scott Matheson, Chair
2007-08