The focus of the Government Relations Committee has been more on the state and local policy level while still monitoring important federal legislation. Each GRC member served as liaison to several chapters and special interest sections and was responsible for keeping those members informed and active in advocacy efforts. To facilitate in those efforts, GRC worked in collaboration with the Government Relations Office to update its GRC website and worked with chapters to develop its own local GRC websites. On the national level, these improvements will help others find important information including the advocacy toolkit, advocacy listserv, state-by-state bill tracking, and prior outreach presentations.

AALL members and chapters continue to play an invaluable role in GRC’s advocacy and outreach at all levels of government; they made the calls, responded to postings on the advocacy listserv, sent the letters, and remembered to thank the government officials who responded well to AALL priorities. There were a number of issues that required advocacy work of our members this year.

The fight to save Connecticut’s courthouse law libraries began last fall when Governor Jodi M. Rell cut a stunning $12.9 million from the judicial branch’s budget. In response to the threat of these closures, the Southern New England Law Librarians Association (SNELLA), GRC, and AALL worked together for months to ensure that adequate funding was restored to the judicial branch’s budget to keep the law libraries open.

Members from GRC; the Government Relations chairs of three AALL local chapters in California (Northern California (NOCALL), Southern California (SCALL), and San Diego (SANDALL); and Anne Bernardo for the Council of California County Law Librarians held a brainstorming session in the fall of 2009 to discuss how to move forward on various state issues impacting libraries and access to information. The meeting was a huge success and energized all of the participants.

In Washington, D.C., GRC member Catherine Dunn and the LLSDC Chapter Government Relations were also very busy monitoring proper authentication and chain of custody of online D.C. Municipal Regulations (DCMR) and the DC Register. GRC also closely monitored the distribution of the administrative register in electronic form in Florida and Maryland with the help of local chapter contacts and former GRC members.

In addition to reaching out to our chapters, GRC monitored many important federal legislative developments including FOIA, network neutrality, CRS reports, the Patriot Act and National Security Letters, the PACER pilot program, and the value of Federal Depository Library Program to selective law libraries. Revised issue briefs and action alerts were posted to the GRC and the GRO website. And thanks in part to the advocacy listserv and the participants of AALL's Day on the Hill, there is a House and a Senate bill to open CRS reports up further to the public.

In addition to monitoring federal legislative issues, members of GRC worked with the Government Relations Office on the Obama administration’s Open Government Initiative. We
submitted ideas for which datasets law librarians and patrons would like to see added to Data.gov. Further, GRC and AALL contributed to an audit of the Department of Justice's Open Government Plan.

Beginning this spring, and carrying into the fall, the AALL Government Relations Committee and the Government Relations Office (GRO) will bring together law librarians to organize state working groups to respond to challenges that threaten the authentication and preservation of legal resources. As part of this process, the state working groups will create an inventory of their state’s legal resources, including what titles are available online only for a fee or are under copyright. More than 180 law librarians in 46 states and the District of Columbia have already signed up to participate in their state’s working groups. Aside from the wonderful contributions from GRC members (in particular Susan Nevelow Mart), we are working with other participants within the “open government” movement including Carl Malamud, Roberta Shaffer of the Law Library of Congress, and AALL member Erika Wayne.

The committee received six nominations for the Public Access to Government Information (PAGI) Award, and after reviewing the nominations, recommended that the Legal Information Institute at Cornell Law School receive it for their innovative work as a leading source of open access to legal information.

Last year, after receiving many strong candidates, the committee proposed modification of the Robert L. Oakley Member Advocacy Award to allow for the nomination of AALL groups in addition to individuals. Our proposal was approved by the Executive Board and, as a result, the committee received three nominations for the Oakley Award and recommended that it be given to the Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries (ORALL) County Law Libraries Special Interest Group for their successful efforts to protect funding for Ohio’s county law libraries.

The committee worked with the Government Relations Office staff to present the 2009 Day on the Hill Legislative Advocacy Leadership Training in Washington, D.C. during the Annual Meeting. More than 75 AALL members from 27 states and Japan attended the full-day training. The important event connected librarians to legislators and legislative advocates. This year, tying into our push for more localized outreach, the theme of the Advocacy Training was “Raising the Bar in Your State” and focused on activism and problem solving at the state and local policy level. We hosted guest speaker Keith Ann Stiverson, AALL observer to the NCCUSL Drafting Committee on the Authentication and Preservation of State Electronic Legal Materials Act, who gave an update on the draft act. Further, there were two open brainstorming sessions for participants to choose from after the NCCUSL discussion: "Proving the Value of Public Law Libraries during the Recession and Beyond" or "AALL State Working Groups."

In addition to advocacy training, GRC program proposals that were accepted for the 2010 Annual Meeting were: 1) G3: “Public Policy Update” (formerly the “Annual Legislative and Regulatory Update”); and 2) J1: “The Future of FOIA.” In addition, other committees and SISs have sponsored several policy programs ranging from practical tips on copyright to future ideas for the Federal Depository Library Program and digitization efforts with the Government Printing Office.
GRC Members for 2009-2010 were: Camilla Tubbs (chair), Stephanie Peace Hess (vice chair), Ryan Saltz (webmaster), Marjorie Crawford, Madeline Cohen, Errol A. Adams, Catherine M. Dunn, Julie L. Kimbrough, Susan Nevelow Mart, and Mary Ann Wacker. AALL President Catherine Lemann served as GRC Board liaison and Mary Alice Baish, director of the Government Relations Office, was the staff liaison. GRC also worked closely with Advocacy Communications Assistant Emily Feldman, who continues to serve a vital role in the Government Relations Office, assisting in various projects.

Respectfully Submitted,
Camilla Tubbs
Chair 2009-2010