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Refining the Government Relations Program: The Final Report of the Task Force on AALL's Government Relations Activities

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Refining the Government Relations Program: The Final Report of the Task Force on AALL's Government Relations Activities*

Introduction**

During the summer of 1993, Kay Todd, President Elect of the American Association of Law Libraries, named a special task force to review the Association's government relations activities, presenting it with a goal of achieving a better coordination of such activities. The charges to the Task Force on AALL's Government Relations Activities and the processes that the Task Force utilized in fulfilling these charges are outlined in the final and interim reports of the Task Force, which follow this introduction. The Interim Report of the Task Force was submitted to the AALL Executive Board prior to its April 1994 meeting for information purposes only. The Final Report, issued on June 21, 1994, outlined nine recommendations relating to AALL's government relations activities. This report was considered by the Executive Board at its July 7-8, 1994, meetings.

This introduction details the Executive Board's actions on the nine recommendations of the Final Report. It is followed by the text of the Final Report, as submitted to the AALL Board but with added footnote information to facilitate access to material cited in the Report. The Interim Report is included as an appendix to the Final Report.

Task Force Recommendations and AALL Executive Board Actions

The AALL Board adopted all but two of the Task Force's recommendations. The adopted recommendations were¹:

- The Washington Affairs Representative should determine when the Assistant Washington Affairs Representative may speak for AALL [Recommendation 1];

* The Task Force members were Laura N. Gasaway; Sarah K. Wiant; Robert L. Oakley, ex officio; and Timothy L. Coggins, Chair. AALL President Kay M. Todd served as the board liaison to the Task Force.

** The introduction to this report was prepared by Timothy L. Coggins, Chair of the Task Force on AALL's Government Relations Activities, and Director and Assistant Professor of Law, University of Alabama School of Law Library, Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

1. Letter from Kay M. Todd, President of the American Association of Law Libraries, to Timothy L. Coggins, Chair of the Task Force on AALL's Government Relations Activities 1 (August 16, 1994). See MEETINGS OF THE AALL EXECUTIVE BOARD, BOARD NOTEBOOKS, July 1994, Book 1, Tab 12. The report of all actions taken on the Task Force Final Report by the AALL Executive Board also appears in MINUTES OF THE AALL EXECUTIVE BOARD, July 7-8, 1994, at 1933-34, American Association of Law Libraries Headquarters, Chicago.

- A meeting of individuals involved in AALL's government relations activities should be convened each year at the Annual Meeting [Recommendation 2];
- The National Legal Resources Committee should be charged to define its role more clearly [Recommendation 4];
- A process for resolving conflicts related to AALL's government relations policy should be adopted [Recommendation 6];
- The Washington Affairs Representative should attend all AALL Executive Board meetings [Recommendation 7]²;
- The responsibilities of official representatives to groups involved in government relations activities should be transferred to the Washington Affairs Representative [Recommendation 8]; and
- The Washington Affairs Representative should develop an ongoing effort to educate the members of AALL about the Association's government relations activities and positions on issues [Recommendation 9].

President Kay Todd indicated that the recommendations would be implemented, and, in fact, the recommendation related to other representatives has been implemented already from a budgetary standpoint.³

The AALL Board did not adopt two of the nine recommendations. Those recommendations were:⁴

- Funds should be budgeted to support travel for those other than the Washington Affairs Representative to testify before Congress [Recommendation 3]; and
- Preservation activities should be the responsibility of the Technical Services Special Interest Section, and, consequently, the Preservation Committee should be terminated [Recommendation 5].

The Board felt that travel funds for presenting testimony on behalf of AALL in Washington should be under the control and within the budget of the Washington Affairs Representative. Washington Affairs Representative Robert Oakley indicated to the Board that he recalled only two instances in which someone other than himself represented AALL at hearings. The Board also felt that the Preservation Committee was undertaking important activities for the Association and that it should be maintained as a separate committee.⁵

2. The Task Force proposed the following: "The Washington Affairs Representative should serve as an ex-officio member of the AALL Executive Board and should attend all Board meetings." However, the Board amended this recommendation to the following: "The Washington Affairs Representative should attend AALL Executive Board Meetings." The amended recommendation passed. See MINUTES, *supra* note 1, at 1934.

3. Letter of Aug. 16, 1994, *supra* note 1, at 1.

4. *Id.* at 2. See also MINUTES, *supra* note 1, at 1933-34.

5. Letter of Aug. 16, 1994, *supra* note 1, at 1.