



WISCONSIN  
LIBRARY  
ASSOCIATION

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**WLA Statement on the proposed restructuring of ALA based upon the recommendations of the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE).**

The Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) Executive Board has reviewed the most recent recommendations from SCOE and is opposed to its acceptance as a whole. While we appreciate the considerable work of the members of SCOE, we do not agree with the recommendation of the replacement of ALA's current governance structure of the ALA Council with the proposed Board of Directors and Leadership Assemblies.

As a Chapter, we feel that the recommendation to eliminate Council, and therefore our individual voice and vote, takes democracy and the organization several steps backward. We cannot recommend in good conscience relinquishing complete governance and policy control to a small Board of Directors that have no requirement to respond to its Assemblies and have a sizable portion of Directors not elected by the membership.

The recommendation for the creation of Assemblies concerns us as it seems to create silos, something that the organization should avoid to encourage member engagement. These Assemblies have proposed liaisons, advisory to the Board, with promised communication going both ways. We cannot recommend advisory liaisons and do not see them as a replacement for the governance that now rests with Council, nor as a replacement for the involvement of Chapters, Divisions, Sections, and Roundtables in ALA governance through their Council representation.

We are disappointed that these concerns listed above, voiced in many in-person and virtual forums, were not addressed in the most recently revised report, Forward Together. We understand ALA's severe financial challenges demand change, and as a Chapter, we are willing to accept difficult decisions. We are requesting that such monumental changes involve long term financial planning and strategic out of the box thinking with an on-going commitment to transparency. The way ALA Council currently operates can be modified without eliminating it completely. The issues ALA Council debates are complex and can impact the library profession in significant ways. Its diverse representation is its strength and keeps us true to our belief in upholding freedom of speech. Without our voice having a dedicated seat and vote at the table, WLA cannot see a secure way forward or together.

Approved by the WLA Executive Board on February 14, 2020.