

# **TN Library Legislative Day, 2019: A Report**

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## **Summary:**

TN Library Legislative Day, 2019 was held in Nashville on Tuesday, March 12, and—as in years past—Nashville Public Library was a generous host for us. This year, we visited with more state reps and senators than in years past due to hosting an on-site coffee/pastries with legislators in the Cordell Hull Building. The coffee was a total success as we were able to meet with legislators and legislative staff we rarely get to see. I also think it gave librarians who may have been intimidated about going to Cordell Hull a little confidence boost and a familiarity with the building and the legislators.

Following the coffee, we met at Nashville Public for an address by Secretary of State, Tre Hargett; State Librarian and Archivist, Chuck Sherrill; and our keynote speaker, ALA Past President, Jim Neal. Following lunch, we went back to Cordell Hull to meet with other legislators and pop into the offices not yet visited. All told, we made face to face contact with all but 15 legislators. We ended the day by taking a photo with the new governor, Bill Lee in the State Capital Building.

Agenda and photo are attached.

## **Legislative goals:**

We went into 2019 Library Legislative Day with two goals in mind: (1) Building relationships with Legislator and (2) pushing for: Net Neutrality, Rural Broadband Access, and School Librarian Representation at a State Level.

Unfortunately, [HB1060, the Net Neutrality bill](#) we supported, failed in subcommittee the day following our Legislative office visits. (Fun fact: Rep. John Ray Clemmons, who sponsored both the bill and our room access for coffee at Cordell Hull, mentioned librarian support for net neutrality in his presentation to the subcommittee. He's currently running for Nashville Mayor, so we'll have to find another legislative library supporter in the building to get the room at Cordell Hull next year.)

[SB0489](#), allowing municipalities to provide broadband outside of their service area, was sent back to General Subcommittee by the sponsor. It may be picked up again next session. We're watching to be sure.

There is no word yet on a State Coordinator of School Library Services. Our colleagues in TASL are [still meeting with legislators about this critical need](#).

## **Attendance & Participation:**

Prior to Library Legislative Day, event invitations were sent on the state library listserv as well as the TN Library Association listserv. The invitation flyer was also shared on social media and posted on the TLA website. The Legislative Committee chair also emailed contact information and appointment scheduling instructions on the listservs. Nearly every attendee had appointments with their reps on Legislative Day. Those without appointments still interfaced with legislators in the coffee and by taking bags to their offices. All told, more than 50 Librarians, Friends, and Trustees attended Legislative Day this year, and nine more participated in the Virtual Library Legislative Day through CQ Engage. (Table of Virtual Leg day attached.)

132 (99 state reps and 33 state senators) "Libraries Need your Support" bags with informational handouts and an invitation to tour the library were distributed to Legislators and their staff. *\*Note for next year, we may need more bags since more than one staff member from the member's office took bags at the coffee.\**

As previously mentioned, we visited with all but 15 reps, the Secretary of State, and Governor Bill Lee, who [signed a proclamation declaring Library Week in Tennessee](#). So, even with a relatively small number in attendance, we made a large impact.

Following TN Library Legislative Day, a "Thank you for meeting with me" email template was sent to attendees to personalize and send to legislators. The template is attached.





TN Librarians with Gov. Bill Lee





# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

TN LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY, 2019

## NET NEUTRALITY: SUPPORT SB0969 / HB1060



Librarians believe that Free and Open Access to Information is vital to a healthy Democracy. Unfortunately, the FCC voted to gut Net Neutrality Protections that limit the power of ISPs, like Verizon and Comcast, to restrict, slow down, or control online content. Libraries rely on strong net neutrality to collect, create, and disseminate crucial information to Tennesseans. TLA calls on our legislature to protect our freedom to access information online

## RURAL BROADBAND: SUPPORT SB0489 / HB0821

With an ever increasing number of job applications, educational opportunities, government programs, and veterans benefits moving online, digital literacy is essential to economic participation and family life. However, an estimated 422,000 households across TN lack access to landline internet speeds that meet the FCC benchmark of high speed broadband. Across TN, rural libraries are the sole free Internet and computer providers in their communities and need additional supports to meet the digital information need rural areas currently face while waiting for broadband access in their area



## SCHOOL LIBRARIAN REPRESENTATION AT STATE LEVEL



The Tennessee Association of School Librarians strongly urges the governor of Tennessee to appoint a certified school librarian to the position of State Coordinator of School Library Services within the Department of Education. The appointment of a state coordinator will help to assure that school library media specialists and their respective districts receive leadership, advocacy, and advisory services pertinent to their needs at the state level.

## CQ ENGAGE Virtual Library Leg DayActivity

Engagement	Messages	Recipient	
Support Tennessee Libraries	3	Baum, Charlie (R-TN), Rep.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	1	Carr, Dale (R-TN), Rep.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	1	Gardenhire, Todd (R-TN), Sen.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	1	Gresham, Dolores (R-TN), Sen.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	1	Hurt, Chris (R-TN), Rep.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	1	Marsh, Pat (R-TN), Rep.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	3	Osborne, Charlie (R-TN), Rep.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	3	Reeves, Shane (R-TN), Sen.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	1	Rudd, Tim (R-TN), Rep.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	1	Swann, Art (R-TN), Sen.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	2	Terry, Bryan (R-TN), Rep.	
Support Tennessee Libraries	4	White, Dawn (R-TN), Sen.	

SUBJECT: Thank you for meeting with me

Dear [Senator/Representative Last Name,]

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with me/us during Tennessee Library Legislative Day on March 12, 2019 in Nashville. I was encouraged by your positive and enthusiastic response to all of the information I/we gave you about Tennessee libraries in general and [insert your library/region/school library name here] specifically.

You will recall that we discussed the importance of Net Neutrality, Rural Broadband, and the need for a Coordinator of School Librarians in the Department of Education. I am aware that there is still much work to be done to reach these goals, and I hope you will continue to support Tennessee Libraries in ensuring Tennesseans have free and open access to information.

We also discussed [insert any other items you discussed here]

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me. [Insert your library/region/school name here] look forward to working with you and your staff in the future. Please feel free to contact me/us if you have any questions or if I can be of any service to you.

Sincerely,