

ARSL Policy on Position Statements & Letters of Support

(Approved by the ARSL Board on 9/30/12)

Introductory statement: ARSL believes that taking a position on issues and policies and promoting those positions are important ways in which we serve our constituents and our cause. We endorse only initiatives, actions or campaigns that relate to our mission.

We must not only serve our communities, we must advocate for our communities. We will use our voice strategically and thoughtfully. In support of ARSL's goal of promoting small and rural libraries, the association will provide letters of support to such initiatives that support the organization's goals after approval by the board of trustees.

Procedure for providing an Position Statement or Letter of Support: The following outlines the principles by which the board will consider taking a position on issues or providing letters of support, and the process to follow when making such a decision.

A position statement or support letter will be considered if it meets the following criteria:

- The issue directly or indirectly affects our organization or the libraries we serve.
- The issue draws on our expertise and knowledge as an organization.
- *NOTE: The Association will not endorse any candidate in any election.*

1. A position statement or a letter of support can be requested by any member. In addition, at its discretion, the Board will consider requests and suggestions from other organizations, groups, or individuals. These suggestions should be sent in writing to the President of ARSL, and should provide the following information:

- The initiative or issue the association is being asked to support.
- Why the support of the Association for Rural & Small Libraries is being sought.
- What ARSL endorsement will add to the effort.
- What the effect will be of the proposed initiative.
- What other organizations have endorsed this effort.

2. Only the ARSL board, by a majority vote, can decide to provide a position statement or letter of support.

3. The President will present the suggestion to the board for discussion, or may refer it to Committee to study and make recommendation regarding action. Subject matter experts may be called upon as needed.

4. Once approved, the President or the President's designee will write letters to officials, editors, and open letters to the public. The Executive Committee will approve the letter. All letters will be signed by the President and Past President of the association.

5. Statements of position will be sent to the Membership by the President via listserv, referenced in the quarterly Newsletter, and posted on the association website.

6. Public policy positions expire after one year from adoption unless the board acts to extend the period. The expiration date will be clearly stated to the receivers and on the official communication. At its discretion, the Board may designate a position statement as permanent. Such a position statement will remain in effect unless rescinded by the Board.

7. If the nature of position statement or letter of support makes it advisable, ARSL will consult with legal counsel to ensure that its action comports with relevant laws and regulations, including election laws.

8. Position statements are separate and distinct from partnership agreements and in no way imply a formal or informal relationship with any other group, organization or business.

9. Nothing in this policy requires that the Board provide a position statement or letter of support on any issue.