

ACRL's *Choice* magazine in 1966-69. She had many articles published in professional literature, including *Library Trends*, *Learning Today*, *Maryland Libraries*, and *Catholic Library World*.

W A S H I N G T O N H O T L I N E

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Eliminate free mailing for the blind? No, of course not, protested many congressional offices in response to incredulous inquiries from constituents. And yet, after voting down nine different budget plans, the budget that the House passed on June 10 did just that. Buried in Budget Function 370, Commerce and Housing Credit, was a proposal to eliminate all postal subsidy.

This innocuous-sounding proposal would bring all nonprofit and educational rates to the full commercial level by October 1, with results as follows:

1. The blind and handicapped would no longer be able to send and receive postage-free braille, large print, and recorded materials. A talking book on cassette tape would cost about 71¢ in postage.
2. Second-class postage for classroom publications would increase 137%, from 7.3¢ for a typical piece to 17.3¢, and other second-class nonprofit publications, such as college catalogs and alumni magazines, would receive significant increases as well.
3. The third-class rate for nonprofit organization newsletters and fund-raising solicitations would increase 86%, from the current 5¢ for a typical letter to 9.3¢.
4. The fourth-class library rate would double, from 43¢ for a two-pound package to 86¢. This rate affects schools, colleges, libraries, and museums who use it to send and receive library books, textbooks, films, and other print and nonprint materials.

Most Members of Congress would not have voted directly for such a proposal, but it was only one of a series of budget figures in a Republican budget substitute amendment made available only a day before it was voted on. Many Members were not aware of the effects of the postal provisions, and many refused to believe it when alerted by librarians and others. As this was written, it was expected that at least part of the damage would be repaired through conference with the Senate-passed budget resolution, which included a little more than the current level of postal subsidy, already cut in last year's budget battles.

However it may turn out, this episode illustrates the danger of large omnibus budget packages, especially when drafted as floor amendments without explanatory reports and without careful attention to major changes. It also demonstrates the vigilance required by library and educational organizations to make sure that public interest provisions enacted after careful congressional deliberation are not eliminated in a day's hasty vote. It also points up the need to have postal statistics readily at hand so that the impact of a proposed change can be quickly estimated.

What does your library spend on fourth-class library rate postage? Estimate the total for the most recent fiscal year and send that information to the ALA Washington Office, 110 Maryland Ave., NE, Box 54, Washington, DC 20002. Let us know if you use other subsidized rates as well. We are always in need of up-to-date examples of postal costs, and we could use more data from academic libraries.

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