



ILLINOIS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Because Libraries Matter

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Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias Selected as 2024 Recipient of the Illinois Library Association Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award

The Illinois Library Association’s Public Policy Committee is honored to present this year’s Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award to Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias. The award is given to a worthy recipient from the Illinois library community - librarian, trustee, legislator, or library - who has contributed significantly to legislative development in the state of Illinois.

Alexi Giannoulias served as the Illinois Treasurer from 2007 to 2011. His service in this office included an expansive ethics reform package within the Treasurer’s Office, the launch of the “Green Rewards” rebate program for residents who purchased a new hybrid or other fuel-efficient vehicle, the creation of the Fallen Heroes and Cultivate Illinois Excellence in Agriculture scholarships, and the reformation of the Bright Start college savings program, which resulted in this program moving from the ranking of 47th out of 48 state programs to being ranked one of the top five programs in the country.

In 2018, Giannoulias was confirmed to the Chicago Public Library Board. He was sworn in as Illinois’ 38th Secretary of State in 2023. As State Librarian, Secretary Giannoulias championed the first-in-the-nation legislation designed to support public and school libraries by withholding state grants from libraries that remove books because of partisan or personal disapproval.

Giannoulas also supported legislation to narrow the digital divide by increasing access to e-books and digital materials. The “License to Read” act allows his office to negotiate with publishers on behalf of public libraries to enable libraries to acquire the licenses needed to allow more library users access to digital resources. The statewide digital resources program is in the process of being rolled out.

The Secretary’s office administers multiple library grant programs each fiscal year, providing more than \$65 million annually to public and school libraries for library resources, technology enhancements, construction, and personnel.

In response to bomb threats against libraries, Giannoulas has been advocating for legislation to protect the safety of the library community. This legislation continues to work its way through the General Assembly with Giannoulas’s support.

Secretary Giannoulas’s dedication and impactful contributions to legislative development make him an outstanding recipient of the Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award. The Illinois Library Association commends him for his commitment to the advancement of libraries and the broader community throughout the state of Illinois.

The Illinois Library Association Robert R. McClarren Legislative Development Award will be presented at an awards ceremony during the 2024 Illinois Library Association Annual Conference. The conference will take place October 8-10, 2024, in Peoria, Illinois.

For more information, contact the Illinois Library Association.

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About the Illinois Library Association

The Illinois Library Association (ILA) is a professional membership organization that represents Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them. Founded in 1896, it is the third-largest state library association and serves as a chapter within the American Library Association. ILA is comprised of 2,000 personal and more than 500 institutional members, made up of public, academic, school, and special libraries, as well as librarians, library staff, trustees, students, and library vendors.