

# Editor's Corner: A Light in the Darkness

Elizabeth Sanders

I have sat down to write this editorial countless times over the past few months. Every time I think I'm ready, something else pops up in the news that causes me to renavigate my thoughts and emotions. These are troubling times for not just all librarians and libraries, not just for those in our communities that rely on us and our work, but also the grander government information landscape. To try and cover all that has happened in the few months since President Trump began his second term would be a paper in itself. I ask for your understanding as I briefly address just two of these areas

First, presidential actions targeting minorities with far-reaching, negative consequences have become the norm. Any effort to support minorities has been labeled "DEI" and dismantled in a variety of settings.<sup>1</sup> Trans, nonbinary, intersex, and people whose identity falls outside of the strict gender and sex binary have been targeted, demonized, and denied their existence, despite all historical, contemporary, and biological evidence.<sup>2</sup> Fundamental, Constitutional rights, such as birth-right citizenship and voting, are being attacked.<sup>3</sup> Legal challenges have been made in response, with judges issuing injunctions, some of which have been ignored, and numerous lawsuits filed.<sup>4</sup> However, the immediate damage has been done, and will continue, unless these actions are reversed.

Second, presidential actions and the newly formed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) have slashed federal funding to critical resources.<sup>5</sup> These budget cuts include firing swaths of federal employees, freezing grant funding, and ending or greatly reducing research and data efforts.<sup>6</sup> As a result, we are losing critical institutional knowledge and infrastructure, skilled labor and the promise of a future federal workforce, and long-standing, critical data resources. As with the other presidential actions, these have led to legal challenges, including injunctions and lawsuits—and as with the other presidential actions, the damage has real time, potentially irreversible effects.<sup>7</sup>

However, I want to leave you all not with these heavy thoughts, but with a message of hope. Andie Craley's From the Chair column in this edition highlights several efforts both within and beyond the library community to preserve access to crucial data resources, inform others of the ongoing situation with the federal government, and advocate for the library community as well as open and free access and preservation of government information.

Many of us already support these efforts; I ask all of us to remember that anything we do, however small, joins with the efforts of others. Together, we are lights in the darkness, with the potential to ignite more even as we offer comfort to those looking for us. We must not let these times extinguish our light. Existence is resistance.

*The views expressed in this editorial are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government Documents Round Table (GODORT), the American Library Association (ALA), Lamar University, or any other entity.*

## References

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