TO: **Department Girls State Directors; ALAGN Committee**

CC: **Department Presidents; Department Secretaries; National Executive Committee Members, National Officers, National Chairmen, Past National Presidents**

From: Kelly Circle, Executive Director

Re: **ALA Girls Nation Update**

03/24/2020

It was announced yesterday The American Legion has cancelled this year’s Legion Boys Nation. We understand the difficulty of the decision and respect the careful thought and consideration that went into it. While our programs are very similar, the ALA has a slightly different set of parameters to consider. The contracts we have in place for ALA Girls Nation gives us a bit more time before we must make the final decision, so we are taking that time to consider our options and see if the COVID 19 curve flattens sooner rather than later. Our first concern is for the safety of the participants and the volunteers so we will be monitoring the situation closely.

ALA Girls Nation Chair, Wendy Riggle and ALA Girls Nation Program Manager, Elizabeth Sendelweck have been reaching out to ALA Girls State Directors across the country this week to get a sense of what is going on at the local level.  The consensus is that most ALA Girls State program directors are taking a "wait and see" approach in hopes they will be able to give their girls that once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Some of the ALA Girls State Directors are exploring a possibility of an online version of their program this year. ALA National Headquarters will be working to help in any way to facilitate that option to every program as requested, including being test participants. We hope to send information on online meeting platforms later this week. If this is something your program is considering, please email Wendy and Elizabeth. Elizabeth will act as a central repository of information and will share with all so we can learn and help each other.

This is a complex decision to make and we have no precedent to guide us which adds to the stress. Please know the NHQ staff will respect and support the decision you make. Do what is best for your program and your team. If a Department chooses to cancel their Girls State program for this year, that Department can still choose two delegates to send to Girls Nation.

We appreciate and respect the due diligence that ALA Girls State directors and their teams are taking regarding their programs. We couldn’t be prouder of the conversations and your ability to see the bigger picture for your programs. We have faith that you will make the best decision possible when the time is right for each of your programs. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to ALA Girls Nation Chair, Wendy Riggle or ALA Girls Nation Program Manager, Elizabeth Sendelweck so we can continue to support you through every step of this process. Remember, we are all in this together and as a family will do all we can to ensure that our future leaders will still have the leadership opportunities that will start them down the path towards their best future.