



*American Association of Law Libraries*  
MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF THE LAW LIBRARY COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

Statement of

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On Behalf of the

**American Association of Law Libraries**  
**American Library Association**  
**Special Libraries Association**

**Before the House Appropriations Committee**  
**Legislative Branch Subcommittee**  
**Public Witness Hearing**

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Good morning. I am Mary Alice Baish, Acting Washington Affairs Representative for the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL). I am very pleased to appear before you today on behalf of AALL, the American Library Association (ALA) and the Special Libraries Association (SLA). The descriptions of our individual organizations are attached at the end of my statement.

Together we represent over 90,000 librarians, information specialists, library trustees and friends of libraries, as well as the more than 1200 libraries in every state and congressional district that participate in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). I am pleased to note that your constituents benefit daily from the collections and services of the thirty depository libraries that serve your districts and states, as well as the government information available online at all libraries. Each of you, therefore, has a personal stake in making sure that the FDLP is adequately funded so that your constituents have easy, no-fee access to a wealth of government information, both in print and electronic formats.

Madam Chair Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Latham, we thank you for holding this important hearing. I am here today to speak in support of the FY 2009 budget request of the U.S. Government Printing Office. Our communities have a very strong interest in Federal information policy and a fervent commitment to public access to government information and a robust FDLP for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The mission of the Government Printing Office (GPO) is uniquely important. GPO provides the three branches of the Federal government with expert publishing and printing services and electronic access to government information through GPO Access. In addition, GPO ensures perpetual, no-fee, ready public access to the printed and electronic information published by the Federal government, in partnership with federal depository libraries.

The public's ability to access e-government information, either at their local depository library, neighborhood library or directly from their desktop, has grown exponentially

since the enactment of the *GPO Access Enhancement Act* in 1993 and the move towards greater e-government by agencies, Congress and the courts. While e-government brings us many opportunities for enhanced public access, many difficult challenges remain unresolved as government moves away from producing its information in print and relies increasingly on “born digital” government information. We believe that GPO has a critical leadership role in helping the Federal government meet these unique challenges.

Our organizations strongly support Public Printer Robert C. Tapella’s statement of March 6, 2008 and we urge the Subcommittee to fund GPO’s full FY 2009 budget request of \$174.35 million. This includes \$97.92 million for Congressional Printing and Binding (CP&B); \$43.42 million for the Salaries and Expenses (S&E) account; and \$33 million for the revolving fund. We believe that full funding is crucial because the FY 2008 omnibus appropriations bill resulted in lower levels of funding for GPO’s many important programs, particularly for the IT infrastructure needed for the development of the Federal Digital System. We further believe that full funding should be provided for Congressional Printing and Binding to eliminate the shortfall in funding for this important program, which is the source of congressional publications that are highly valued by users of depository library collections. I would now like to describe in more detail why each of these funding requests is so important for the library community and the American public.

**First, the Federal Digital System.**

Our organizations and all library communities have championed GPO’s development of the Federal Digital System (FDsys). This content-centric system will ensure that electronic information from all three branches of the Federal government will be permanently available in electronic format, authenticated and versioned, and accessible through the Internet for easy searching, viewing, downloading and printing. We believe that its implementation is key to GPO’s ability to provide services to Congress, agencies, depository libraries and the public in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. New state-of-the-art systems do not come cheap, and GPO must be given adequate funds to provide the IT infrastructure needed to launch FDsys by the end of the year. A total of \$21.2 million has been requested

for FY 2009 to fund the establishment and operations of FDsys. Of that amount, \$15.5 million has been requested for the revolving fund to support the first release and system enhancements. An additional \$5.7 million has been requested for the S&E to digitize parts of the legacy collection and acquire expanded Web harvesting services.

Our organizations have been monitoring the development of FDsys and we commend GPO for consulting frequently with the depository library community on its design and implementation. As outlined in the GPO Strategic Vision in 2004, the agency expected to invest \$29 million to develop FDsys. They have spent \$18 million to date from funds reprogrammed in 2005 from prior year unspent CP&B and S&E appropriations. GPO is currently funding FDsys from their revolving fund. In order to maintain progress and meet their target date for an initial release later this year, their funding request of \$21.2 million is critically important.

We believe that GPO has made good progress on specifying and developing FDsys. In September 2007, GPO released a Proof-of-Concept of FDsys and began giving demonstrations to stakeholders. These stakeholders, including the Office of the Clerk of the House, the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, the depository library community and federal agencies have had the opportunity to participate in beta testing of the proof-of-concept. Responses to the proof-of-concept have been overwhelmingly positive—over 90% of the beta test users stated that FDsys works as expected, validating that GPO is on the right track.

GPO remains focused on the first public release of FDsys targeted for later this year. This includes replacing GPO Access functionality and transferring current GPO Access content into FDsys. Work on FDsys has also helped guide GPO's efforts to meet disaster recovery needs. Digital publications in GPO Access needed to be converted into the new structure to work with modern search tools associated with GPO's agency disaster recovery plans. Accordingly, GPO migrated these digital publications in GPO Access into a consistent, flexible, tagged dataset that support their disaster recovery plan and will

be utilized in FDsys. Our communities have long urged GPO to implement a disaster recovery capability and we are pleased with their progress in this arena.

On another important front, GPO is continuing its advancements in automated web harvesting in anticipation of the second release of FDsys. The goal of web harvesting is to discover and capture newly identified online publications that are within the scope of GPO's information dissemination programs, increasing public access to online government information and ensuring its preservation. GPO is using the lessons learned from the 2006 pilot project with the Environmental Protection Agency to continue the development of automated publication harvesting tools and methodologies in preparation for full implementation with FDsys. We applaud these developments and ask that you please fully fund FDsys in FY 2009 to ensure its initial release and future enhanced functionalities.

**Second, Salaries and Expenses.**

The S&E appropriation is essential to supporting the FDLP, the very successful partnership program through which congressional and other important government publications and information products are disseminated to approximately 1,250 participating academic, public, law, Federal and other libraries nationwide. The S&E funds the cataloging, indexing, and distribution of Federal publications in print and electronic formats to depository libraries and other recipients designated by law. GPO's FY 2009 S&E request of \$43.42 represents a much-needed increase of \$8.5 million over the current level to cover mandatory pay and price increases; overhead distribution; and several important information technology projects that are designed to expand and improve public access to government information.

We fully support GPO's important effort to replace the obsolete technology of GPO Access with the state-of-the-art Federal Digital System. GPO Access uses WAIS, an antiquated pre-web technology that makes it difficult for the average user to search and locate the information they need. The navigation features of GPO Access are clunky and the search functions are poor, as you might expect from a 15-year old technology. Often

only simple tasks can be performed satisfactorily. So while GPO Access provides access to wonderful content, the ability to find exactly what one needs is a daunting challenge to most users. In addition, even frequent users are often plagued with technical problems, including linking and internal server errors, slow retrieval and difficulties with full text searching. GPO Access must be updated for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the content migrated into FDsys. The search capabilities of FDsys will be a vast improvement over the current system and will provide users with advanced search capabilities. Although its first public launch is not scheduled until the end of the year, we have begun to see some progress because of new functionalities that FDsys already provides.

For example, through FDsys, GPO has begun implementing digital signatures to certain electronic documents on GPO Access that not only establish GPO as the trusted information disseminator, but also provide the assurance that an electronic document has not been altered since GPO disseminated it. A digital signature, viewed through the GPO Seal of Authenticity, verifies document integrity and authenticity on GPO online Federal documents, at no cost to the end user. Recently, GPO digitally signed the *2009 Budget of the United States Government*. This is the first time this has been done, and GPO staff used the newly implemented Automated PDF Signing (APS) system to complete the signing.

The APS system has been integrated into the beta Public and Private Laws for the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress application. GPO staff has successfully worked with the Office of the Federal Register to move the Public and Private laws beta application to a live application. This live database has now replaced the previous database, which provided the same files, but unsigned. GPO plans to continue work with Congress and others to digitally sign additional content on GPO Access. We applaud these efforts and believe that GPO will be able to provide agencies with digital authentication services for their online information, just as GPO served as a publisher for agencies in the print world. The digital signatures establish GPO as *the* trusted information disseminator for the Federal government by providing a level of assurance that an electronic document has not been altered since GPO disseminated it.

We would also like to commend GPO for the following additional new initiatives that have resulted in improved access to government information. These demonstrate the variety of services that GPO is able to provide, thanks to your support for their S&E appropriations.

*The PACER Beta-test.*

In September 2007, the Judicial Conference approved a pilot project to provide Federal depository libraries access to PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records), an online service of the Administrative Office of the U. S. Courts. The PACER system provides remote access to case and docket information from the Federal Courts via the Internet. Records include information from the Appellate, District and Bankruptcy Courts. Users of PACER are able to access information about a case including the names of all the parties, judges and attorneys involved in the case, case history and status, as well as many of the documents submitted by the parties to the court.

The PACER pilot project provides the public with no-fee access to important court information through sixteen participating depository libraries. The goal of the pilot project is to determine if Federal depository library access to PACER expands usage to those who currently do not have it available to them or would be inhibited by going to a court house to use the service. Participating libraries are obligated to promote the PACER service to the public, and to report back to GPO. Their efforts have been very successful. The first bimonthly report, which covers December 2007 through January 2008, reveals that there were 150 PACER users, 67 of whom had not previously used the service. I am especially pleased to note that this successful project, which we hope will eventually be broadened to include all depository libraries, came as a result of the 2006 AALL Executive Board "Resolution on No-Fee FDLP Access to PACER" that was transmitted to former Public Printer Bruce James. We applaud GPO and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts for this important new collaboration.

*New GPO/Depository Library Partnerships*

During the past year, GPO joined with the University of Illinois at Chicago and other participating Federal depository libraries to promote "Government Information Online:

Ask a Librarian” (GIO). GIO is a free, Web-based virtual reference service provided by almost 20 Federal depository libraries throughout the country that focuses on responding to government information-related questions. GPO is participating in this project by promoting GIO to other Federal agencies and by submitting to GIO questions received through askGPO that do not relate to GPO programs, services or products. GIO is an example of a successful collaboration, and represents how depository libraries and their highly skilled and knowledgeable librarians are focusing on new services to provide improved access to government information. GPO and depository libraries will continue to collaborate in new ways to provide “point of need” access to Federal government information.

Training is an important component of the partnership between GPO and depository libraries, and we are very pleased that GPO has initiated online training via Online Programming for All Libraries (OPAL), an interactive Web-based meeting and conferencing service. These educational events are held in the GPO OPAL room and allow participants to interact via voice-over-IP, text chatting and synchronized browsing. In addition, training events are archived to allow those unable to attend a live event to replay the event at their convenience. Past presentations, which remain archived, were given by GPO staff on the following topics: the Catalog of Government Publications, Browse Topics and digital authentication. Recently, GPO opened up its OPAL room to members of the depository library community who would like to present additional educational and training sessions for the benefit of the entire community.

Also last year, GPO formed a partnership with the Naval Postgraduate School that will allow depository libraries to gain access to the Homeland Security Digital Library (HSDL). HSDL is a database containing U.S. policy documents, Presidential directives and national strategy documents, as well as other specialized resources related to the study of homeland security. The University of North Texas (UNT) has also partnered with GPO to provide access to the Web sites of defunct Federal agencies and commissions. UNT captures the agency's or commission's Web site as they close their

operations and then provides public access to the sites from their CyberCemetery of Defunct Federal Agencies and Commissions.

**Third, Congressional Printing and Binding.**

We urge you as well to support GPO's request of \$97.92 million for Congressional Printing and Binding. Access to legislative information—the daily and bound *Congressional Record*, bills, committee hearings (full published transcripts as opposed to hearing statements posted to committee Web sites), reports, prints, documents and other materials—is crucial to the public's ability to monitor and participate in the legislative process. Full funding is especially important so that GPO can make up the shortfall from FY 2007 and the predicted shortfall for FY 2008. Congressional materials are heavily used at depository libraries, both for current and historical research. They must be published and distributed to members of Congress and depository libraries in a timely fashion. And while we value the ability to access these materials electronically through GPO Access, GPO has acknowledged the continued need for the print distribution of congressional and other legal materials to depository libraries because print is both official and authentic, and the electronic versions of these legal resources are not.

**Fourth, the Revolving Fund.**

We support GPO's revolving fund request of \$33 million, almost half of which is needed for the completion of FDsys and other essential information technology infrastructure projects that are critical to the agency's effective and efficient operations. The revolving fund request also includes \$17.5 million for much-needed building maintenance and repairs.

**Fifth, the Federal Depository Library Program in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**

Our Nation was founded on the core principle that citizens have a right and need to access information by and about their government in order to participate in our democracy and hold government accountable. The origins of the FDLP and its partnership with Congress date back to the Act of 1813, when Congress authorized legislation to provide one copy of

the House and Senate Journals and other Congressional documents to certain universities, historical societies and state libraries. The FDLP has proven to be a tremendously successful partnership among Congress, Federal agencies, the courts, the GPO, depository libraries and the American public in ensuring the public's right to know. The FDLP flourished during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and today's tangible collections of government documents at depository libraries are a treasure trove that documents the history of our government.

The FDLP and depository libraries continue to be crucial access and service points for the American public in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The program provides your constituents with equitable, ready, efficient and no-fee access to Federal government information in an increasingly electronic environment. In addition to Congress, the White House, approximately 130 Federal departments and agencies and the Federal courts rely increasingly on GPO's state-of-the-art technologies to create and disseminate government information through the Internet. FDSys will make GPO's partnership with these other government entities stronger and more important than ever before.

Each participating Federal depository library makes significant investments to ensure that the public has effective access to government information. For example, FDLP libraries invest in technologies to assist in accessing electronic government information. These investments exemplify the substantial costs that participating depository libraries incur in order to provide your constituents with equitable, ready, efficient and no-fee access to government information in both print and electronic formats. These costs include providing highly trained staff, adequate space, necessary additional materials, and expensive equipment and Internet connections. The success of GPO Access cannot be measured without acknowledging the substantial costs incurred by depository libraries.

Federal depository libraries serve as important channels of public access to government publications and contribute significantly to the success of the FDLP. The Government's

responsibility to make government publications in both tangible and electronic formats available to depository libraries is successful because of the necessary partnerships developed between the Federal government, the GPO and the participating libraries. Electronic documents are especially important, as they are available to a larger portion of the population through all libraries and the Internet. In order for GPO to continue to increase the amount of government information available for current and future public access through the Internet and in order for the Federal government to fulfill its responsibilities for this partnership, it is critically important that Congress provide adequate funds to support the transition to a more electronic program.

**Conclusion.**

AALL, ALA and SLA respectfully urge the Subcommittee to support GPO by approving the Public Printer's FY 2009 appropriations request in its entirety. Full funding is vital so that GPO is able to fulfill its mission of disseminating Federal government information of all three branches of Government to the American public. We ask that you please include this statement as part of the Subcommittee's record for today's "Legislative Branch Subcommittee Public Witness Hearing." I'll be more than happy to answer any questions you might have. Thank you very much.



### *American Association of Law Libraries*

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The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5,000 members nationwide who respond to the information needs of legislators, judges, and other public officials, corporations and small businesses, law professors and students, attorneys and members of the general public. AALL's mission is to promote and enhance the value of law libraries to the legal and public communities, to foster the profession of law librarianship, and to provide leadership in the field of legal information and information policy.

<http://www.aall.org/>



The American Library Association (ALA), the oldest and largest library association in the world, is a nonprofit educational organization of over 65,000 librarians, primarily school, public, academic, and some special librarians, as well as trustees, publishers and friends of libraries. The Association provides leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship to enhance learning, and ensure access to information for all.

<http://www.ala.org/>



The Special Libraries Association (SLA) is a nonprofit global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners. SLA serves more than 11,000 members in 75 countries in the information profession, including corporate, academic and government information specialists. SLA promotes and strengthens its members through learning, advocacy and networking initiatives.

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