Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record in support of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 funding requests of the Government Printing Office (GPO) and the Library of Congress (LC). We welcome Chairman Cole back to the Subcommittee and congratulate him on his chairmanship. We also recognize Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz for her ongoing support of GPO and LC.

The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), the Medical Library Association (MLA), and the Special Libraries Association (SLA) represent more than 18,000 librarians and information specialists throughout the country and around the world. Our members rely on the Government Printing Office and Library of Congress for access to official, authentic, and preserved government information and collections in multiple formats.

**Government Printing Office**

On March 4, 2014, the Government Printing Office (GPO) celebrated 153 years of “keeping America informed.” Despite great changes to the way documents are published and distributed during this time, GPO’s mission has remained focused on providing access while keeping costs down by using the most efficient technologies. Today, GPO produces, authenticates, disseminates, and preserves government information in multiple formats from all three branches of government. GPO makes this information permanently available at no cost to the public on FDsys and through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

GPO had a busy and productive FY 2013, which included the confirmation of Davita Vance-Cooks as Public Printer of the United States. Public Printer Vance-Cooks quickly proved herself to be an energetic leader with a strong vision to transform GPO to meet the demands of the digital age. Since her confirmation by the Senate in August 2013, Public Printer Vance-Cooks has overseen several important joint projects with the Library of Congress, including the September 2013 release of a new app and web publication of the Constitution Annotated and the February 2014 release of the House of Representatives bill summaries available in XML format for bulk data download. These projects allow members of the public to more easily learn about the laws that govern them.

Public Printer Vance-Cooks also ensured continuous public access to government information during the October 2013 federal government shutdown. While many agency websites were unavailable, GPO.gov was accessible, the Catalog of Government Publications was available to search, and FDsys was updated with Congressional information. The shutdown demonstrated
GPO’s critical role in safeguarding the full electronic life-cycle of digital content, from harvesting and cataloging to permanent public access and preservation.

Our associations urge the Subcommittee to approve GPO’s request of $32,171,000 for the Salaries and Expenses Appropriation. This funding will support the FDLP’s digital harvesting and content management program and the digitization of GPO’s historic shelflist. These initiatives are critical to ensuring long-term access to resources from all three branches.

GPO’s recent FDLP Forecast Study found that the federal depository library community relies on GPO to take the lead in life-cycle management processes and procedures to preserve both tangible and digital government information. We strongly urge the Subcommittee to support GPO’s efforts to ingest more agency content into FDsys and to continue to harvest agency websites through the Web Harvesting Pilot Project. As Chairman Cole described in the March 4 Legislative Branch Subcommittee hearing on GPO, there are many examples of documents that are no longer available because technologies changed and they were not captured. If more agency information, including older materials, is included in FDsys, the public will have guaranteed permanent public access to this content, even during a government shutdown or similar situation. We urge the committee to support agency partnerships with GPO. GPO’s recent pilot partnership to make digitized historic content from the Treasury library available on FDsys is an excellent model.

The 200-year-old FDLP is a successful, cost-saving partnership between government and libraries. Through the FDLP, your constituents receive congressional and other important government publications and information products at 1,200 geographically convenient libraries, with the assistance of trained librarians. The FDLP leverages taxpayer dollars by shifting the considerable costs of these services to its 1,200 partner libraries, including the 30 libraries in your districts. Access to government information in both print and electronic formats through the FDLP is crucial to many types of users, including historians conducting research, members of the public looking for rules in the Federal Register, and small business owners searching for regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations. We are pleased that GPO recognizes that not all users want to receive information in electronic formats. We commend GPO for continuing to provide access to core documents in print.

Our associations also support GPO’s request of $11,347,500 for the Revolving Fund, which will allow a much-needed upgrade to FDsys as well as critical facilities repairs. Adequate funding for FDsys projects, including a new search engine, will allow GPO to ensure that users can quickly and efficiently access the materials they need. This spring, GPO will host its Federal Depository Library Conference at its headquarters on North Capitol Street. It is critical that GPO have the ability to replace aging elevators and the roof, as well as upgrade basic building infrastructure to protect its employees and guests.

Finally, we urge the Subcommittee to approve GPO’s request of $85,400,000 for Congressional Printing and Binding. Access to legislative information—the daily and bound Congressional Record, bills, committee hearings, reports, prints, documents and other materials—allows members of the public to learn about the activities of the Congress and participate in the legislative process.
Library of Congress

As the largest library in the world, the Library of Congress provides leadership on many critical issues, including digitization and preservation, access to legal and scholarly information, and copyright. Members of our associations rely on the Library of Congress for its extensive collection of millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps, and manuscripts. We strongly support the Library’s request for a 2.3 percent increase over the FY 2014 level, which reflects only mandatory expenses.

The Library has recently taken the lead on several important digital initiatives. We commend the Library for the launch of Congress.gov, the official source for federal legislative information which is supported by content from the Law Library of Congress. We also appreciate the Library’s efforts to work with the Office of the Clerk and GPO to make more legislative data publicly available. These initiatives lead to a more open and transparent government.

The Law Library of Congress is the world’s largest law library, with a collection of nearly three million volumes spanning the ages and covering virtually every jurisdiction in the world. We urge support for the classification of the remaining volumes to Class K Law Classification. Without this classification, these materials are not accessible.

Additionally, we support the request of $53,068,000 for the Copyright Office. Our associations have long contributed to the policy debates on copyright. The House Judiciary Committee is currently conducting a review of copyright law. It is particularly important the Office has support for its priority initiatives, including the ongoing study of orphan works.

Our associations are also grateful for funding in the FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations package for the construction of Fort Meade Module 5. This funding, which the Library has requested for several years and which we strongly supported, will give the Library the ability to preserve and make accessible more of its unique collections. We urge the Subcommittee to support future requests for storage space that will allow the Library to protect its valuable holdings.

Conclusion

AALL, MLA, and SLA respectfully urge you to fully fund the appropriations requests of the Government Printing Office and the Library of Congress. If we can provide additional information or assistance to the Subcommittee, please contact AALL’s director of Government Relations efeltren@aall.org and (202) 942-4233.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Anderson
President
American Association of Law Libraries
The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) was founded in 1906 to promote law libraries’ value to the legal and public communities; foster the law librarianship profession; and provide leadership in the legal information field. With nearly 5,000 members, AALL represents law librarians and related professionals who are affiliated with law firms; law schools; corporate legal departments; courts; and local, state and federal government agencies.
http://www.aall.org
Contact: Emily Feltren, (202) 942-4233

The Medical Library Association (MLA) is a nonprofit, educational organization with more than 4,000 health sciences information professional and institutional members worldwide. Founded in 1898, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.
http://www.mlanet.org
Contact: Mary M. Langman, (312) 419-9094, ext. 27

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) is a nonprofit global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners. SLA serves about 9,000 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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