



Oral Statement of

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On Behalf of the
American Association of Law Libraries
Medical Library Association
Special Libraries Association

Legislative Branch Subcommittee Public Witness Hearing
House Committee on Appropriations
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Good morning, Madam Chair Wasserman Schultz, Ranking Member Aderholt, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries, the Medical Library Association and the Special Libraries Association.

We are committed to the democratic principle of the public's right to access government information at no cost through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

We support Public Printer Robert Tapella's full FY 2010 budget request for the Government Printing Office. GPO's mission to *Keep America Informed* is uniquely vital to our democracy. We also recognize your need to make tough decisions for FY 2010 spending.

First, I'd like to thank you for your strong support of GPO's funding needs in FY 2009, which included increases to Congressional Printing and Binding, Salaries and Expenses, and the Revolving Fund. We are especially grateful for the \$1 million dollars for the continued development of the Federal Digital System, or F.D.sys.

F.D.sys is essential to GPO's future and the needs of the public. We welcomed its first release in January. Building, maintaining and enhancing F.D.sys is crucial. There are enormous costs involved in properly managing the life cycle of online information, including its authentication, permanent public access and preservation.

Public Printer Tapella requested \$8 million dollars for the further development of F.D.sys, listing it as his top funding priority during last week's hearing before the Subcommittee. We absolutely agree. An adequate annual level of funding for F.D.sys is necessary to ensure that its future development and enhancements keep up with the pace of technology.

Second, we fully support the \$40.9 million dollar request for Salaries and Expenses which funds the FDLP. As GPO expands its efforts to provide information in electronic formats while maintaining the print distribution of important documents to depository libraries, it is imperative that new, recurring costs related to identifying, acquiring, cataloging and distributing government resources be fully supported.

GPO's cataloging and indexing services are crucial to the ability of the public to locate the government information they need. This is more important than ever as F.D.sys enables the harvesting of online-only resources from agency Web sites.

We believe that the S&E funding request to hire 10 additional full-time staff to ensure more timely acquisitions, cataloging and indexing services is absolutely essential.

Third, as a former documents librarian, I would like brag about the very important services that depository librarians provide to your constituents each and every day.

Responding to an August 2008 request from the Superintendent of Documents, members of the FDLP community submitted statements about the value of their collections and services. I invite you to view the [responses](http://www.fdlp.gov/home/about/100-fdlvalue) on the FDLP Web site.
<http://www.fdlp.gov/home/about/100-fdlvalue>

Among them, Broward County Main Library in Ft. Lauderdale noted that, while many basic questions can be answered through information on government Web sites, including F.D.sys and GPO Access, their historic print depository collection is also heavily used.

Among their recent "success" stories are helping customers find:

- a copy of an 1871 document titled "A Report on the Defenses of Washington to the Chief of Engineers of the U.S. Army";
- primary source material from the Civil War era;
- the 1919 Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy which is only available in the U.S. Serial Set; and,
- a 1988 Federal regulation that is not available online.

Librarians at the Shepard Broad Law Library & Technology Center, also in Ft. Lauderdale, have observed significant growth, both in the number of public users and the circulation of documents. More members of the public face pressing legal issues but do not own a computer or can not afford to purchase the legal materials they need.

At a time when all states, including Florida, are enacting severe budget cuts that will negatively impact library funding, the law library's participation in the FDLP ensures that the public will continue to have access to essential legal titles. Recent reference statistics

indicate that bankruptcy, housing foreclosures, and assistance with healthcare, housing, and immigration services, are the leading information needs of their public users.

Document librarians also develop finding tools whenever a new “hot” button issue occurs, such as the recent outbreak of Swine Flu.

Last week the Georgetown University Law Library updated their “Public Health - Pandemic Flu Research Guide” on Federal, state and international laws related to the prevention, detection and containment of human influenza.

http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/guides/publichealth_pandemic.cfm

The documents librarian at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks posted a new online guide to federal documents, many of which are Congressional hearings, published during and after the last U.S. Swine Flu outbreak in the 1970s.

http://www.worldcat.org/profiles/dcornwall/lists/697063?view=&se=added&sd=desc&start=11&qt=next_page

It’s simply impossible, in this short amount of time, to describe adequately the excellent services that depository libraries provide daily to your constituents. We ask that you approve GPO’s FY 2010 funding request to support the collections and services needed by depository libraries. Last year, I asked you to become champions of GPO’s F.D.sys, and I applaud you for doing so.

The FDLP’s greatest challenge today is the fusion of valuable print collections with 21st Century technologies. The added value, which is the heart of the program, is contributed by the very dedicated librarians at Federal Depository Libraries. Please send a clear message to GPO and FDLP libraries that their collections and services are needed, and appreciated by you, more than ever before.

Thank you very much.