



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

Mary Alice Baish
Acting Washington Affairs Representative

Georgetown University Law Center
Edward Bennett Williams Library
111 G St. NW
Washington, DC 20001-1417
(202) 662-9200
www.aallnet.org/aallwash

baish@law.georgetown.edu

May 2, 2008

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-147 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Latham
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-147 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz and Ranking Member Latham:

I look forward to testifying before you next week at the Public Witness Hearing in support of the FY 2009 appropriations request of the U.S. Government Printing Office. In addition, I write to you today to express our endorsement of the statement that will be given by Congressman William Orton, on behalf of the American Bar Association, in support of the FY 2009 funding for the Law Library of Congress. Full and adequate funding for the Law Library is crucial to its ability to fulfill its mission in providing timely access to its collections to Congress, the Congressional Research Service, the U.S. Courts, the executive branch, the legal community and members of the public.

The American Association of Law Libraries (“AALL”) is a non-profit educational organization with over 5,000 members nationwide. 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. Access to government information, the future of the Federal Depository Library Program, and the adequate funding of our Nation's de facto national law library are three important priority issues for AALL and our members.

The Law Library of Congress is the world's largest collection of United States federal and state, international, comparative and foreign legal documents, covering over 200 jurisdictions. With an exceptionally skilled staff competent in most foreign languages and international law and legal systems of the world, the Law Library serves thousands of users each year and, in addition, a rapidly increasing number of remote users through its Web site and its unique digital collections.

The Law Library of Congress needs adequate annual funding:

- to develop and maintain its comprehensive legal collections, including foreign and international materials essential to global commerce;
- to achieve timely cataloging and processing of all new materials;
- to support the critically important "Access to Law Collections" project to reclassify its print collection to the Class K international standard for legal materials—until this project is completed, a substantial portion of the library's collection cannot be easily retrieved;
- to ensure the conservation of the Law Library's collection of over 65,000 unique rare books; and,
- to provide specialized legal research to members of Congress and their staff.

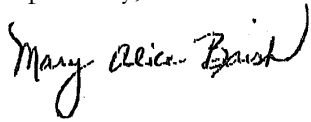
At the same time, the Law Library must continue to develop and enhance its important digital projects, such as the Global Legal Information Network, a uniquely important multinational legal database of current, official foreign laws, regulations and other legal resources important to our government, to the legal and business communities and the public.

AALL and the ABA have been working closely together for well over a decade to seek ways to improve funding for the Law Library. In 2001, our Executive Board passed a Resolution on the Creation of a National Law Library, expressing our concern that "the Law Library's services, collections, facilities and digital projects have not been sustained with adequate budgets or staffing necessary to fulfill the Library's mission to serve Congress as well as the legal community and the public." While we recognize that creating an independent National Law Library is a long-term goal, the crisis at hand is to fund the Law Library so that it becomes the first-class library that its collections, its staff and its users deserve.

Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz, since I met with you in February, along with Congressman Orton and others from the ABA, we have been working with Representative Zoe Lofgren and her staff on a legislative solution which we believe is critically important to the Law Library's future and for which we seek your Subcommittee's support. It has three important components: 1) the authorization of a one-time, additional \$3.5 M for the Law Library of Congress; 2) the authorization for a separate line item in the federal budget for the Law Library; and, 3) the authorization for the creation of a non-profit Foundation. The Foundation would be the mechanism for the ABA to begin fundraising efforts for expanded services, such as interlibrary loan and document delivery.

In conclusion, we seek the Subcommittee's support for the Law Library's full funding in FY 2009 and for the legislation that Representative Lofgren is preparing to introduce. I thank you both for your strong support for the Law Library of Congress and look forward to working with you on these important matters. I respectfully ask that you please include this statement as part of the record of the May 7, 2008 Public Witness Hearing. Thank you very much.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Alice Baish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "M".

Mary Alice Baish
Acting Washington Affairs Representative
American Association of Law Libraries