



American Association of Law Libraries

MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF THE LAW LIBRARY COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

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July 25, 2008

The Honorable Daniel E. Lungren
United States House of Representatives
2448 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0503

Dear Representative Lungren:

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), I thank you for your strong commitment to improve funding for the Law Library of Congress through the introduction of H.R. 6589 this week. AALL strongly supports the Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Improvement and Modernization Act, and we look forward to working with you to move the legislation through Congress this year. When enacted, H.R. 6589 will put the Law Library in a position to become the first-class library that Congress, legal researchers and members of the public deserve.

AALL is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5000 members nationwide who respond to the legal information needs of legislators, judges, and other public officials at all levels of government, corporations and small businesses, law professors and students, attorneys and members of the general public. Our members serve the information needs of the legal community and the public at more than 1900 academic, firm, state, court and county law libraries. AALL's mission is to promote and enhance the value of law libraries, to foster law librarianship and to provide leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy.

AALL is a strong champion of the Law Library, and we have been working closely for many years with the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Law Library of Congress to seek ways to improve its funding. Our Immediate Past President, Ann T. Fessenden, and our ABA colleagues testified at the Committee on House Administration's October 24, 2007 Oversight Hearing on The Library of Congress during which you heard our concerns about the impact of inadequate funding on the Law Library's collections and services.

In her statement, Ms. Fessenden noted the need for the Law Library to have adequate funding to develop and maintain its comprehensive and unique legal collections which include foreign and international materials essential to global commerce; to achieve timely cataloging and processing of

all new materials; and to support the critical need to preserve its collection of over 65,000 rare and historic resources. Specifically, Ms. Fessenden noted that the Law Library must have necessary funds to maintain its journal subscriptions and purchase new treatises and to complete the K reclassification project. The rising costs of legal serials have forced the Law Library to cancel subscriptions, thus depriving users of important current legal information. In addition, she noted our long-standing concern that, due to lack of funding, approximately 680,000 volumes have not been moved into the K classification structure. Without such reclassification, these important resources, many of which are foreign legal documents, cannot be located within the Law Library's collections and therefore are not accessible to researchers and the public. Ms. Fessenden also recommended that the Committee consider authorizing a line item in the Federal budget.

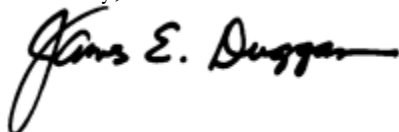
We are very grateful to you and Rep. Lofgren for hearing our concerns and those of our ABA colleagues and for introducing the Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Improvement and Modernization Act to address these long-standing problems. We believe the authorization of an additional \$3.5 million for the Law Library in Sec. 2 is crucial so that cancelled subscriptions can be renewed, needed treatises can be purchased, and the reclassification project can move forward at a faster pace.

The authorization of the separate line item in Sec. 3 will allow the Law Librarian of Congress to have better control of the Law Library's own budget, decide how the annual appropriations are best spent and, very importantly, be directly accountable to the Congress. We believe an additional benefit will be a higher level of visibility for the Law Library, including with members of Congress and their staff. This provision is especially timely and, in our view, crucial to attracting well-qualified candidates in the search to replace Dr. Rubens Medina, Law Librarian of Congress, who retired at the end of June.

The establishment of the Charles H.W. Meehan Law Library Support Program in Sec. 4 will allow outside funding to be raised and provided to the Law Library for new enhanced services that are very important to legal researchers and the public. We are very grateful that AALL and the ABA are named as major stakeholders in the new Program.

AALL commends you for co-sponsoring this excellent and much-needed legislation. We are committed to working with you and Rep. Lofgren to ensure that H.R. 6589 is enacted this year. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James E. Duggan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

James E. Duggan
President
American Association of Law Libraries