

JURISDOCS

Newsletter of the American Association of Law Libraries
Government Documents Special Interest Section

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

It's time for an update on various activities involving our SIS so far this year. In December, the transfer of publishing responsibility for our State Documents Bibliography series took place. Now the Publications Committee and AALL Headquarters will handle duplicating, putting covers on, and sales. Currently for sale are 26 titles (see ad in the February 1987 **AALL Newsletter**). Our SIS will continue to select authors and handle the editorial end of things. We have 9 authors working on new bibliographies for presentation at our SIS business meeting in Chicago, and 4 others already committed to doing bibliographies for publication in 1988. Fifty copies of each new 1987 bibliography will be available free on a first-come-basis to attendees at our business meeting on Monday, July 6. These titles will then be advertised for sale in the Sept. **AALL Newsletter**.

Mary Anne Royle has been working hard with arrangements for the two programs our SIS is sponsoring for the Chicago meeting. These programs, which will provide a look at Latin American documents and an update on U.S. federal documents, are described elsewhere in this issue.

AALL now has an official liaison to ALA/GODORT. Veronica Maclay of our SIS has been appointed to this position by AALL President Lolly Gasaway. Veronica will provide GODORT with information on our association's activities and

vice versa. She plans to be at the ALA meeting this June.

Much has been happening in Washington in recent months concerning funding--and the future direction--of the depository library program. The Public Printer's stated plan to meet reduced GPO budget appropriations is simple: more microfiche. Currently, over 60% of depository titles are issued only in microfiche. Our SIS has been involved, both directly and indirectly, in responding to the changing situation. At our urging and that of the AALL Committee on Legislation and Legal Developments, AALL has spoken out about the effects of budget cuts on the depository program and the possibility of electronic format for some government documents (as the Ad Hoc Committee on Depository Library Access to Federal Automated Data Bases has been exploring).

At the AALL Executive Board meeting in January, approval was given to a draft letter submitted by our SIS and the Committee on Legislation and Legal Developments. This letter was sent by Lolly Gasaway, AALL President, to chairmen of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and their Subcommittees on Legislative Branch Appropriations. On February 25, the House Subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 1988 GPO appropriation. AALL submitted a written statement and Bob Oakley (director of Georgetown University Law Library and a member of our SIS) read the prepared statement to the committee. Copies of the

statement are available from: Joanne Zich, Washington College of Law Library, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016 (202/885-2679). Joanne is Chair of the Committee on Legislation and Legal Developments, and a member of our SIS. Several other library groups also testified that day. Susan Tulis and Joanne Zich were both present.

The Government Documents SIS has helped alert AALL members about the serious situation now facing the depository program. We can be pleased with the response, both by individuals and by the Association itself, to our call for help. The outlook is uncertain but we have made our views known to the decision-makers in Congress and at GPO.

It's been an interesting year so far-- we should have lots to talk about in Chicago!

Sally Holterhoff

**AALL TESTIFIES ON GPO FY88
APPROPRIATION**

Robert Oakley, Director of the Georgetown University Law Library testified on behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries at House Appropriations subcommittee hearings on the GPO FY 1988 appropriation request on Wednesday, February 25, 1987. In response to pressure from librarians and the Joint Committee on Printing, GPO increased the dollar amount originally requested for Superintendent of Document

programs by \$2 million. \$1.2 million is designated to continue the dual distribution of major legislative and regulatory documents in paper and microfiche. The balance (\$.8 million) is for initiation of the first phase of a program to test pilot projects as recommended to the Joint Committee on Printing by the Ad Hoc Committee on Depository Access to Electronic Data Bases. Steve Margeton has served as the AALL representative to the Ad Hoc Committee.

AALL's testimony supported both continued funding for dual distribution and testing of pilot projects. Members of the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations (it is chaired by Vic Fazio, D. Calif.) were very aware of problems posed to libraries by the changes in depository distribution suggested last fall by Public Printer Ralph Kenickell. They acknowledged the effectiveness of lobbying efforts by librarians and library associations.

Senate hearings were held Wednesday, March 4, 1987. Although AALL was not at the Senate hearing, the Association did submit a statement for the record. Susan Tulis, AALL representative on the Depository Library Council and Joanne Zich, chair of the AALL Committee on Legislation and Legal Developments attended the House hearing. Both reported feeling optimistic about eventual funding for the dual distribution program; they were somewhat less sanguine about funding for the pilot projects. There is still time to contact

your Representatives and Senators to express support for the depository library programs:

Representative Jamie L. Whitten; Chair, Committee on Appropriations; H 218 Capitol; United States House of Representatives; Washington, DC 20515-6015

Representative Vic Fazio; Chair, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations; H 302 Capitol; United States House of Representatives; Washington, DC 20515-6025

Senator John C. Stennis; Chair, Committee on Appropriations; Dirksen Senate Office Building; United States Senate; Washington, DC 20510-6025

Senator Dale Bumpers; Chair, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations; S 128 Capitol; United States Senate; Washington, DC 20510-6025

**STATEMENT OF THE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW
LIBRARIES BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
ON APPROPRIATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FEBRUARY 23, 1987

The American Association of Law Libraries is a professional organization of over 4,000 members representing most of the approximately 1,100 law libraries in the United States. The AALL is a strong

supporter of the Depository Library Program of the Government Printing Office. The importance of the depository program to law libraries and to the legal community cannot be overstated. The judicial, legislative and regulatory publications that are the heart of a law library's permanent, non-depository collection are supported by the documents received through the depository system, just as the depository materials are enhanced by these basic legal materials.

This important relationship between legal materials and official government publications led to Public Law 95-261 (92 Stat. 199), making accredited law school libraries eligible for depository status. Since this 1978 enactment, over 100 law school libraries have become depositories. At present nearly 200 law school libraries and over 50 state court libraries have depository status.

AALL is concerned that the proposed budget for the Superintendent of Documents, which represents a real reduction in expenditures, is based on recent proposals from the Public Printer that would reduce the availability of documents to citizens in general, and to the legal community in particular. We urge the Committee to appropriate sufficient funds to insure the continuation of the depository program without impairing the flow of government information to the public.

The depository program provides an "information safety

net" that insures access to government information for members of the public in every Congressional district.

The depository program has proved to be an effective means of placing government information in the hands of citizens efficiently and at relatively low cost. Nearly 1,400 libraries around the country participate in this program mandated by Title 44, Chapter 19 of the U.S. Code. The depository system is available to benefit the public in every Congressional district. This "information safety net" insures free access to laws, regulations, statistics and a wealth of information produced by and about the federal government.

Recent proposals to save money on the depository program by distributing many of the most important materials only in microform will substantially impair citizen access to government information.

Because the program is so valuable, Association members are concerned about the effect that budget cuts are having on GPO and ultimately on users in libraries around the country. The need for fiscal restraint in all government programs is understandable and AALL is aware that GPO has made cuts in a number of areas. One of the ways money has been saved is by converting paper documents to microfiche for depository distribution. Most documents that can readily be used in microfiche format have already been converted; depository distribution is now over 60% microfiche and still increasing. Nonetheless, seeking still further savings,

the Public Printer has proposed in recent months the microfiche-only distribution of major legislative and regulatory documents. The library community responded to this proposal with an outpouring of letters and telephone calls citing the hardships that further conversion to microfiche would impose on providing effective service to their users.

In making his proposal, the Public Printer selected material distributed both in paper and microfiche. In doing so, he targeted some of the most important titles in the program, including the **Congressional Record** and the **Code of Federal Regulations** as well as Congressional hearings and reports. Dual distribution for these materials was developed as a method of cutting GPO costs while allowing libraries to select formats based on their users' needs and space considerations. Everyone has benefited from dual distribution. It has been endorsed by libraries with the understanding that microfiche-only distribution is unacceptable for these important titles.

Depository librarians recognize that microfiche is a useful format for many government publications. Microfiche offers space savings that permit many depositories to select titles they could not house if only available in paper. But it is **not** an appropriate format for **all** publications.

Recognizing this, the Superintendent of Documents issued a policy statement, SOD 13 on August 22, 1983, listing

criteria to govern conversion of documents to microfiche. Factors included physical characteristics (color, type size, publication size), timeliness (regulations, news releases), intended audience, reference value and historical significance of the publications. In proposing the wholesale conversion of all dual format materials, the Public Printer has abandoned this reasonable approach, and appears to be making decisions based on expedience rather than the needs of documents users. With over 60% of depository documents distributed in microfiche, the American Association of Law Libraries believes that the limits of useful conversion to microfiche distribution have been reached, and we object to the recent departure from the conversion guidelines. Further microfiche distribution threatens the heart of the depository program. It will result in greatly reduced access for users in law libraries and depositories to all types of key documents; documents that should be available in paper because they are time-sensitive or have formats that make microfiche copies difficult to use.

Substantial cost savings can probably be realized through the conversion of appropriate materials to electronic formats, and the American Association of Law Libraries supports the efforts to experiment with the electronic distribution of government data.

Perhaps the dual goals of controlling costs and delivering information in a

timely and usable fashion can be better achieved by providing some publications in electronic format. Our Association enthusiastically endorses the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Depository Library Access to Federal Automated Data Bases. This group, authorized in May of 1983 by the Joint Committee on Printing, includes representatives from 15 organizations, among them the AALL. Sixteen federal agencies have submitted proposals to the Ad Hoc Committee for a wide range of pilot projects to test the feasibility of providing depository access to information available through emerging technologies. We strongly support funding for selected pilot projects. Careful planning and testing today will ensure future effective public access to government information.

The American Association of Law Libraries urges the members of your committee to appropriate funds for GPO in FY 1988 sufficient to fully support the depository program, consistent with its statutory mission.

**LAURA N. GASAWAY
PRESIDENT**

**APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGETING
FOR GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**

WHO TO WRITE IN YOUR STATE

ALABAMA

Tom Bevill (D,4th)
House Appropriations Committee

ALASKA

Ted Stevens (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Joint Committee on Printing

ARIZONA

Dennis DeConcini (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Joint Committee on Printing

ARKANSAS

Bill Alexander (D,1st)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

Dale Bumpers (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee,
Chair

CALIFORNIA

Edward R. Roybal (D,25th)
House Appropriations Committee

Julian C. Dixon (D,28th)
House Appropriations Committee

Vic Fazio (D,4th)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee, Chair

Jerry Lewis (R,35th)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

Bill Lowery (R,41st)
House Appropriations Committee

Leon E. Panetta (House,D,16th)
Joint Committee on Printing
[new Committee member]

Robert E. Badham (House,R,40th)
Joint Committee on Printing

COLORADO

Timothy E. Wirth (D)
Senate Budget Committee [new
committee member]

William L. Armstrong (R)
Senate Budget Committee

CONNECTICUT

Lowell P. Weicker, Jr. (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee

Christopher J. Dodd, (D)
Senate Budget Committee [new
committee member]

FLORIDA

Bill Chappell, Jr. (D,4th)
House Appropriations Committee

William Lehman (D,17th)
House Appropriations Committee

C.W. Bill Young (R,8th)
House Appropriations Committee

Lawton Chiles (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee,
Chairman

GEORGIA

Wyche Fowler, Jr. (D)
Senate Budget Committee [new
committee member]

HAWAII

Daniel K. Akaka (D,2d)
House Appropriations Committee

Daniel K. Inouye (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee

IDAHO

James A. McClure (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee

Steven D. Symms (R)
Senate Budget Committee

ILLINOIS

Sidney R. Yates (D,9th)
House Appropriations Committee

Richard J. Durbin (D,20th)
House Appropriations Committee

John Edward Porter (R,10th)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

Robert H. Michel (R,18th)
House Appropriations Committee

Paul Simon (D)
Senate Budget Committee [new
committee member]

INDIANA

John T. Myers (R,7th)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

Dan Quayle (R)
Senate Budget Committee

IOWA

Neal Smith (D,4th)
House Appropriations Committee

Tom Harkin (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee

Charles E. Grassley (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee
[new committee member]
Legislative Branch Subcommittee
Senate Budget Committee

KANSAS

Nancy Landon Kassebaum (R)
Senate Budget Committee

Pat Roberts (House, R,1st)
Joint Committee on Printing

KENTUCKY

William H. Natcher (D,2d)
House Appropriations Committee

Harold Rogers (R,5th)
House Appropriations Committee

LOUISIANA

Lindy (Mrs. Hale) Boggs (D,2d)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

Bob Livingston (R,1st)
House Appropriations Committee

J. Bennett Johnston (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee

MARYLAND

Steny H. Hoyer (D,5th)
House Appropriations Committee

Barbara A. Mikulski (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
[new committee member]
Legislative Branch Subcommittee

MASSACHUSETTS

Edward P. Boland (D,2d)
House Appropriations Committee

Joseph D. Early (D,3d)
House Appropriations Committee

Silvio O. Conte (R,1st)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

MICHIGAN

Bob Traxler (D,8th)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

Bob Carr (D,6th)
House Appropriations Committee

Carl D. Pursell (R,2d)
House Appropriations Committee

Donald W. Riegler, Jr. (D)
Senate Budget Committee

MINNESOTA

Martin Olav Sabo (D,5th)
House Appropriations Committee

Rudy Boschwitz (R)
Senate Budget Committee

MISSISSIPPI

Jamie L. Whitten (D,1st)
House Appropriations Committee,
Chairman.

John C. Stennis (D)
Senate Appropriations
Committee, Chairman

Thad Cochran (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee

NEBRASKA

Virginia Smith (R,3d)
House Appropriations Committee

J. James Exon (D)
Senate Budget Committee

NEVADA

Harry M. Reid (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
[new committee member]
Legislative Branch Subcommittee

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Warren Rudman (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee [new
committee member]

NEW JERSEY

Bernard J. Dwyer (D,6th)
House Appropriations Committee

Frank R. Lautenberg (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee

NEW MEXICO

Joe Skeen (R,2d)
House Appropriations Committee

Pete V. Domenici (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee

NEW YORK

Matthew F. McHugh (D,28th)
House Appropriations Committee

Robert Mrazek (D,3d)
House Appropriations Committee

Jack F. Kemp (R,31st)
House Appropriations Committee

Bill Green (R,15th)
House Appropriations Committee

Alfonse M. D'Amato (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee

Daniel Patrick Moynihan
(Senate D)
Joint Committee on Printing
[new committee member]

NORTH CAROLINA

W.G. (Bill) Hefner (D,8th),
House Appropriations Committee

Terry Sanford (D)
Senate Budget Committee [new
committee member]

NORTH DAKOTA

Quentin N. Burdick (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee

Kent Conrad (D)
Senate Budget Committee [new
committee member]

OHIO

Louis Stokes (D, 21st)
House Appropriations Committee

Clarence E. Miller (R, 10th)
House Appropriations Committee

Ralph Regula (R, 16th)
House Appropriations Committee

OKLAHOMA

Wes Watkins (D, 3d)
House Appropriations Committee

Mickey Edwards (R, 5th)
House Appropriations Committee

Don Nickles (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee
[new committee member]
Senate Budget Committee [new
committee member]

OREGON

Les AuCoin (D, 1st)
House Appropriations Committee

Mark D. Hatfield (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Legislative Branch Subcommittee
Joint Committee on Printing

PENNSYLVANIA

John P. Murtha (D, 12th)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

William H. Gray, III (D, 2d)
House Appropriations Committee

Joseph M. McDade (R, 10th)
House Appropriations Committee

Lawrence Coughlin (R, 13th)
House Appropriations Committee

Arlen Specter (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee

Joseph M. Gaydos (House D,
20th)
Joint Committee on Printing

RHODE ISLAND

Claiborne Pell (Senate D)
Joint Committee on Printing
[new committee member]

SOUTH CAROLINA

Ernest F. Hollings (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee

TENNESSEE

William Hill Boner (D, 5th)
House Appropriations Committee

Jim Sasser (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee

TEXAS

Charles Wilson (D, 2d)
House Appropriations Committee

Ronald D. Coleman (D, 16th)
House Appropriations Committee

UTAH

Jake Garn (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee

VERMONT

Patrick J. Leahy (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee

VIRGINIA

Frank R. Wolf (R,10th)
House Appropriations Committee

WASHINGTON

Norman D. Dicks (D,6th)
House Appropriations Committee

WEST VIRGINIA

Alan B. Mollohan (D,1st)
House Appropriations Committee

Robert C. Byrd (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee

WISCONSIN

David R. Obey (D,7th)
House Appropriations Committee
Legislative Subcommittee

William Proxmire (D)
Senate Appropriations Committee

Bob Kasten (R)
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Budget Committee

Suzanne Miller

**ALA Midwinter -
GODORT Happenings**

The main topic of discussion was adequate funding for GPO (or more to the point - the lack of adequate funding). The Public Printer has asked for \$21 million for FY 1988, which is less than he ended up getting for FY 1987 and was the reason he proposed doing away with the dual format. When asked why the figure was less, Mr. Kennickell said that there would be "greater reliance on microfiche".

The Joint Committee on Printing has been working with GPO to come up with some cost savings for FY 1987. So far, they have come up with four proposals. Two have been implemented, one is still being looked at and a fourth will not show any savings until 1988. The first proposal was to stop over-ordering on Congressional hearings and committee prints. The second was to have the cost of creating microfiche masters transferred to the congressional committees. These two activities will save about \$230,000 a year. The third proposal is to find a way to bind the Serial Set more inexpensively - maybe even contracting out part of it. And the fourth proposal is to put hearings and committee prints on separate item numbers to allow for more selectivity.

Some other issues that were brought up include the following: NTIS privatization - OMB has ordered NTIS to proceed with the A-76 process to contract out their functions. There is an increased effort to limit access to nonclassified Department of Defense materials. There now exists a Coalition on Government Information, organized last summer in Washington, DC. More members are needed. For additional information, contact the ALA Washington Office (202/547-4440).

Other bits and pieces of information that I picked up - the 1986 Notable Documents List is to be published in the May 15th issue of **Library Journal**. **Documents to the People** has a new editor, Diane Garner, and she plans to make some changes

and additions to the newsletter. Look for an editorial page, letters to the editor, profiles of people, news articles about meetings people have attended, etc. Also, there will not be a December 1986 issue of DTTP. A two part survey of the Census State Centers and libraries is being done. The product decisions for the 1990 Census will be made this fall. If you have opinions on these products, send them to the Census Bureau. The earliest products will be geographical in nature, microfiche products are to be of improved quality over the 1980 versions, the entire country will be blocked and there is talk of distributing some materials in machine readable form, including CD-ROM. During a discussion of microfiche headers, a need was expressed to establish liaisons between GODORT and various federal agencies to make known document librarians' concerns and suggestions. Such a relationship already exists with the Census Bureau. The Department of Education, Energy and EPA were brought up as possible candidates for future liaisons. The draft 1987 Biennial Survey was pretested in Maryland. The Survey will be sent to depository libraries in April and have a return deadline of May 30, 1987. GPO plans to construct a database called PAMALA (Profile, Administration, Management, and Library Analysis) to manipulate survey data and provide statistical profiles of depository libraries.

SUSAN TULIS

**RESOLUTION ON GPO
APPROPRIATIONS**

ALA GODORT Legislation
Committee

January 19, 1987

WHEREAS the Government Printing Office (GPO) Library Programs Service is the primary provider of free public access to federal government information, reaching the entire citizenry through the system of 1400 depository libraries nationwide; and

WHEREAS lack of budgetary resources has caused GPO to depart from past guidelines which identify appropriate publications for conversion to microfiche (SOD 13, August 22, 1983); and

WHEREAS GPO has exceeded the limits of acceptability to users by distributing to depository libraries over 60% of its current titles in microfiche; and

WHEREAS the Joint Committee on Printing is reviewing pilot projects for the dissemination of government information in electronic format to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the provision of government information to the public; and

WHEREAS the GPO appropriation for FY 1987, totaling \$22,256,000, is less than the 1986 appropriation for library programs and not adequate to continue needed programs such as dual

distribution (paper and microfiche) of major publications central to the activities of a democratic government and heavily used by the public, such as the Code of Federal Regulations and congressional hearings, prints, and reports; and

WHEREAS GPO's funding request for 1988 is only \$21,000,000 based on an unacceptable increase in the number of publications converted to microfiche; therefore be it

RESOLVED that ALA GODORT urge Congress to appropriate emergency supplemental funding FY 1987 Library program at least at the FY 1986 level; and be it further

RESOLVED that ALA urge Congress to appropriate adequate funds for FY 1988 to provide for:

** continuation of current library programs including distribution of government publications in paper, microfiche, or dual format, as appropriate for user needs; and

** the implementation of the pending pilot projects for the distribution of government information in electronic format to depository libraries; and

** development of programs utilizing new technologies, such as distribution of information on compact disk; and be it further

RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to appropriate committees of Congress and the Public Printer.

Initiated by: Government Documents Roundtable.

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING
OMB'S PROPOSED PRIVATIZATION
OF NTIS**

WHEREAS the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposes to contract out or privatize the National Technical Information Service (NTIS); and

WHEREAS strong objections have been submitted to NTIS and OMB by the American Library Association, other professional library and information science associations, the academic and research community, individuals, and private sector organizations requiring rapid, economical access to scientific and technical information collected or generated with U.S. tax dollars; and

WHEREAS ALA has expressed its concerns regarding the maintenance of the vital functions currently performed by NTIS; namely:

a) provision of a centralized source and permanent repository for a broad range of federal, international, state, local, and other unclassified scientific and technical reports;

b) provision of bibliographic access to the material through tools such as NTIS' **Government Reports Announcements and Index**;

c) dissemination of bibliographic information products of such a repository, i.e., catalogs, indexes,

abstracts, and newsletters, through the Government Printing Office's Depository Library Program;

d) operation of a timely, "on-demand" sales program for this scientific and technical information at prices affordable for not-for-profit libraries, educational institutions, students, small business entrepreneurs, and other small groups; and

WHEREAS such contracting out or privatization of NTIS would adversely affect equal and ready access to scientific and technical information crucial to the competitive position of the U.S. in the world economy, and to the security of the nation; and

WHEREAS the Office Management and Budget has not responded publicly to these concerns; now be it therefore

RESOLVED that the American Library Association calls upon the Congress of the United States to hold hearings on OMB's proposal and, if necessary, draft and pass legislation designed to assure that the interests of the American public and the functions identified above will not be vitiated should OMB proceed with its plan to contract out or privatize NTIS; and be it further

RESOLVED that copies of the Resolution be transmitted to the appropriate committees of Congress, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, appropriate committees of Congress, the Secretary of Commerce, the Director of the National Technical Information

Service, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Initiated by: Federal Librarians Round Table and Government Documents Round Table

Nature of content: ALA Policy Manual Section

Both resolutions adopted by unanimous votes at GODORT Business Meeting, 1/20/87

ROLE OF MICROFICHE WITHIN THE CONGRESSIONAL DEPOSITORY PROGRAM

ALA POSITION STATEMENT

The Congressional Depository Library Program is an essential mechanism for making federal information available to the public at no cost to the users. Every congressional district is served by at least one depository library, with a total of some 1400 libraries.

Recognizing certain benefits of microfiche, the library community has supported the GPO microfiche program from its beginnings. This program has made possible the distribution of materials which would otherwise not be available from GPO or which, given space limitations, would not be selected.

Microfiche, however, is not an appropriate format for all information. Factors which make conversion from print to fiche inappropriate include physical characteristics (color, type size, publication size), timeliness (regulations,

news releases), intent or intended audience, reference value, or historical significance of the publications. These criteria are part of the policy statement issued by the Superintendent of Documents and generally agreed to by the depository community, August 22, 1983, SOD 13. Within the past year, GPO's Library Programs Service has been given permission by the Public Printer to depart from these guidelines in the interests of "cost effectiveness."

Users' needs differ. There will always be library patrons who prefer or require paper. Level, nature, and frequency of use are other factors which affect the acceptability of microfiche to the public.

Additionally microfiche is an interim technology that soon may be replaced by electronic formats. Libraries are reluctant to invest in equipment that soon may be obsolete.

Dual distribution, the distribution of certain titles in both paper and microfiche format, developed as a method of cutting GPO costs while allowing libraries to select formats based on their users' needs and space considerations. These titles are chiefly congressional and regulatory publications central to the activities of our democratic form of government. Everyone has benefited from this arrangement which assures that the public interest is being served by the most appropriate format while holding down government spending. Dual distribution was originally

endorsed with the understanding that microfiche-only distribution was unacceptable for these important titles. Depository librarians continue to support this position.

As the result of reduced funding for LPS, the Public Printer has asked the Joint Committee on Printing for permission to eliminate choice of format for almost all congressional publications, requiring all libraries to accept only microfiche. This change in policy has met widespread opposition from thousands of librarians and users.

Unfortunately many believe numerous publications are already inappropriately distributed in microfiche. Some libraries report dramatic drops in the use of depository materials converted to microfiche. Wholesale conversion because of budgetary limitations undermines the original intent of the depository program to provide the public with ready access to federal information.

It is imperative that further inappropriate conversion to microfiche be halted, and that dual distribution be continued. The budget for funding GPO's Library Programs Service must be restored to a level which permits distribution of needed information in a form commensurate with the need and abilities of users and appropriate to the nature of the materials being distributed.

Further conversion to microfiche is not a substitute for adequate funding. The ability of the Depository

Library Program to serve the citizens is at stake.

**SIS TO SPONSOR 2 PROGRAMS
IN CHICAGO**

**1. Federal Documents in 1987
and Beyond**

Monday, July 6, 1987 8:00 p.m.
- 9:30 p.m.

In light of recent events affecting the distribution of depository materials to libraries, this program should offer a chance for law librarians to gain a greater understanding of the scope and magnitude of the issues as they may effect the present and future depository program. The tensions between budgetary constraints and distribution of depository materials have brought about a crisis of sorts between GPO and depository libraries. What can AALL members do to better understand and resolve this issue? What are other library associations and councils doing about this problem? What is GPO's perspective? What is the best route to allay this crisis? Can the Ad Hoc Committee play a role?

The panel, which was coordinated by Sarah Holterhoff of Valparaiso University College of Law Library, will be moderated by Susan Tulis (University of Virginia Law Library), who is the AALL Representative to the Depository Library Council. Speakers will include Mark Scully, Director of Library Programs Service at GPO; Steve Margeton (U.S. Supreme Court), who is the AALL member of the

Ad Hoc Committee on Depository Library Access to Federal Automated Databases; and Steve Hayes (University of Notre Dame), who is the incoming chair for ALA's Government Documents Round Table (GODORT).

1. Latin American Documents

Wednesday, July 8, 1987 9:00
a.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Chris Corcos of Case Western University Law Library has coordinated and will moderate a panel on acquiring and using Latin American materials. Earl Weisbaum of Los Angeles County Law Library and an expert on Latin American materials will discuss obtaining and using these documents from the librarian's perspective. Speaking from the scholarly researcher's perspective will be Professor Donald Ramos of Cleveland State University. Professor Ramos, who has researched in Brazil and Nicaragua, will also cover the importance of preserving these materials as well as tips for obtaining them through non-traditional channels.

This program, with its timely topic, should provide great insights into the acquisition and preservations of legal materials from Latin American countries.

Mary Anne Royle

CONTRIBUTIONS

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