



April 6, 2018

The Honorable Kevin Yoder
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable James Lankford
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations
U.S. Senate

Dear Chairman Yoder and Chairman Lankford,

On behalf of the American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, the American Association of Law Libraries, and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, we write to ask for your continued support for the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and other Public Information Programs of the Superintendent of Documents within the Government Publishing Office (GPO). In particular, we ask for your support for a study by GPO of grant-making to Federal Depository Libraries.

The FDLP is a decades-long collaboration between libraries and the federal government to ensure that members of the public have effective and long-term access to government information. Although libraries value the FDLP, participating libraries incur significant unfunded costs in order to provide services to the public under the program. These unfunded costs have led to a net decline in the number of Federal Depository Libraries of 18 percent since 1988, reducing the public's access to this vital program.

In recognition of this challenge, in testimony before the Committee on House Administration in July 2017, then-Director of GPO Davita Vance-Cooks suggested that Congress consider giving GPO the authority to make grants to Federal Depository Libraries. We believe this idea is worthy of further exploration. Therefore, we ask the Subcommittee to request that GPO study the creation of a grant-making program to support the services of Federal Depository Libraries in providing permanent public access to federal information. In doing so, we also urge the Subcommittee to encourage GPO to coordinate with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and to consult with stakeholders, including the Depository Library Council and library associations, about how such a program might be administered.

Our associations appreciate the Subcommittee's support of the FDLP. We look forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee to ensure this program carries out its important mission of providing the American public with transparency and access to government information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gavin R. Baker, Assistant Director of Government Relations
American Library Association

Prudence S. Adler, Associate Executive Director
Association of Research Libraries

Emily Feltren, Director of Government Relations
American Association of Law Libraries

Timothy Cherubini, Executive Director
Chief Officers of State Library Agencies

cc: The Honorable Tim Ryan, Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations
The Honorable Chris Murphy, Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations