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Testimony of Femi Cadmus
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On Funding for the Government Publishing Office and Library of Congress
Before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Public Witness Hearing
April 2, 2019

Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member Herrera Beutler, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for holding a public witness hearing on Legislative Branch Appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. I'm honored to have the opportunity to testify about the essential roles of the Government Publishing Office (GPO) and the Library of Congress in supporting a strong democracy.

The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) is the only national association dedicated to the legal information profession and its professionals. Founded in 1906 on the belief that people—lawyers, judges, students, and the public—need timely access to relevant legal information to make sound legal arguments and wise legal decisions, its more than 4,100 members are problem solvers of the highest order.

AALL members rely on GPO, the Library of Congress, and the Law Library of Congress for access to and preservation of official, trustworthy government information. Adequate funding for these agencies ensures access to information, which supports access to justice and preserves the rule of law.

Funding for the Government Publishing Office

Under Title 44 of the U.S. Code, GPO is responsible for the production and distribution of information products for all three branches of the federal government. GPO produces, authenticates, disseminates, and preserves government information in multiple formats.

Since FY 2018, GPO has completed several important projects to provide greater access to digitized historical material, including working with the Office of the Federal Register to digitize and provide public access to every issue of the *Federal Register* back to 1936 and the bound *Congressional Record* back to 1873. Increased access to both historical and current content on GPO's govinfo website is beneficial to researchers, librarians, and members of the public who can view bills and statutes, budget materials, executive agency publications, and judicial opinions.



We commend GPO for recently achieving certification as a Trustworthy Digital Repository in compliance with International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 16363. GPO is the only organization in the United States and the second organization in the world to achieve the highest global standard of excellence for digital repositories.

AALL has a special interest in full funding for GPO's Public Information Programs account that supports the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). The requested funding level of \$31.3 million will allow GPO to provide additional support for locating and processing federal information for inclusion in the FDLP and the Cataloging and Indexing Program.

GPO administers the FDLP by providing federal government information products in multiple formats to more than 1,100 participating libraries across the country. These libraries are charged with ensuring no-fee access to government information to the American public, including to the residents of your districts. Members of the public visit depository libraries to access essential legal titles on topics such as health information, bankruptcy, and housing services. Approximately 200 law libraries participate in the FDLP, including my own institution, Duke University School of Law. The J. Michael Goodson Law Library, open to the public, celebrated its fortieth year as a selective depository library in 2018.

AALL also supports full funding for the Congressional Publishing appropriation and Revolving Fund so that GPO may continue to publish legislative information and support the development of govinfo to add new content collections and improve the accessibility and discoverability of information.

Funding for the Library of Congress

AALL is grateful to the Subcommittee for its approval of past requests to replace broken shelving, implement a digitization strategy to provide access to public domain U.S. legal and legislative materials, and to allow the Law Library to continue to work toward completion of the K Class modern classification standard to increase public access to its law collection.

The Law Library is a treasured institution with an unparalleled collection of domestic, foreign, and international legal material. The Law Library is a world leader in providing access to reliable legal materials in print and electronic formats and it must have adequate funding to meet the needs of Congress, the Supreme Court and other court judges, attorneys, and the public.

AALL supports the Law Library's \$18 million request for FY 2020 so that it may, among other priorities, complete Phase 3 of the project to archive the Law Library's Global



Legal Research Directorate reports and continue its digitization efforts to provide access to historical Congressional and other public domain materials. AALL also urges continued investment in the development of Congress.gov, the official website for federal legislative information and an essential tool for legal research.

We commend the Library of Congress for updating its information technology operations and meeting nearly all of the recommendations from the Government Accountability Office's 2015 report on the agency's information technology. We also express appreciation for modernization efforts at the Copyright Office, which has been working in close coordination with the Library of Congress's Office of the Chief Information Officer. We welcome Dr. Hayden's appointment of Karyn A. Temple as the new Register of Copyrights, and we are confident the Office's modernization will continue under her leadership.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee on the FY 2020 requests of GPO and the Library of Congress. AALL urges you to approve as close to full funding as possible for these legislative branch agencies.