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March 26, 2020

The Honorable John Kennedy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial Services and
General Government
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for the FY 2021 Funding Request of the National Archives and Records Administration

Dear Chairman Kennedy, Ranking Member Coons, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), I write in strong support of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 budget request of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). AALL respectfully requests that the Subcommittee fully fund NARA in the FY 2021 appropriations bill.

AALL is the only national association with 4,000 members dedicated to the legal information profession and its professionals. AALL was founded in 1906 on the premise that lawyers, judges, students, and the public need timely access to relevant legal information to make sound legal arguments and wise legal decisions.

As the nation's record keeper, NARA preserves and makes accessible official records of the federal government. AALL members rely on NARA's electronic and in-person resources and services for access to legal and government information, including the records of the federal judiciary and executive branches. AALL urges the Subcommittee to appropriate the agency's FY 2021 request of \$367 million.

NARA's funding request will enable the processing, preservation, management, and storage of federal government records in print and electronic formats; expand veterans' access to their military records; and support the activities of the Public Interest Declassification Board, among other priorities. In addition, the request will support NARA's Office of Federal Register, which produces essential legal publications including the daily *Federal Register*, the *Code of Federal Regulations*, and the *Statutes at Large* in partnership with the U.S. Government Publishing Office.

NARA has experienced a dramatic increase in electronic holdings in recent years, while also taking on new responsibilities for the declassification of records and the maintenance and management of three new presidential libraries. As a result of past underfunding, NARA has cut back on public services and research hours at more than



40 records facilities and presidential libraries. The Office of Management and Budget's recent approval of the closure and sale of the NARA records facility in Seattle, Washington—the only federal records center in the Pacific Northwest—highlights the challenges NARA faces in providing public access to its physical collections and the growing need to digitize its records and provide remote services.

In response to these challenges, NARA has optimized resources and realigned priorities to provide permanent public access to federal records. NARA's FY 2021 request will enable the agency to increase these efforts, including accelerating the processing and release of large volumes of digital government information through digitization of paper and other archival records.

As the Subcommittee considers agency priorities and funding levels, AALL respectfully urges the Subcommittee to fully fund NARA so that it can continue to preserve and provide expanded access to the unique and valuable government records in its custody.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Cosby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Cosby
President