

**Written Testimony of Emily R. Florio  
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For the Hearing Record**

**Fiscal Year 2022 Funding for the U.S. Government Publishing Office and  
the Library of Congress**

**U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch**

**May 5, 2021**

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

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), an organization representing 4,000 law librarians and legal information professionals, I thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget requests of the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) and the Library of Congress. The GPO, the Library of Congress, and the Law Library of Congress provide free access to current and historical legal information that benefits law libraries and the public.

AALL is aware of the ongoing challenges facing the Subcommittee because of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also recognize the urgent security needs of Congress following the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. We appreciate the difficult funding decisions you will need to make as you look to allocate limited resources among all the agencies and offices under your jurisdiction.

During the past year, the GPO, the Library of Congress, and the Law Library of Congress have demonstrated their abilities to manage increased workloads and new challenges efficiently and effectively. AALL believes that approving the funding requests of the GPO and the Library of Congress will allow these two agencies to make needed investments in staffing and information technology to support their important programs and services and to expand public access to government information.

**Funding for the U.S. Government Publishing Office**

AALL urges the Subcommittee to support the GPO's FY 2022 funding request of \$125.5 million. This funding will allow the GPO to meet its responsibilities to produce, organize, authenticate, preserve, and provide public access to official government information in print and online. The GPO partners with 1,100 libraries—including 200



law libraries—to provide free public access to official, authentic, and preserved government information through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). GPO provides access to more than one million current and historic government titles and resources available online and in FDLP libraries, including federal agency publications and court opinions. During the current pandemic, FDLP libraries are offering many virtual services to assist library patrons find and use these materials, such as reference assistance through the phone, email, and text chat services. FDLP libraries have also created research guides to direct library patrons to federal government information on current topics including COVID-19 and racial equity.

AALL thanks the Subcommittee for its support of the GPO’s past funding requests. Past funding levels have allowed the GPO to provide education, outreach, and training opportunities to help FDLP libraries maintain their federal government documents collections and improve their services to the public. Past funding has also allowed the GPO to expand its online collections available through the GPO’s *govinfo* website and to work with libraries to digitize valuable historical collections. Free public access to these online collections has been especially important during the current pandemic, as many libraries closed their physical buildings or reduced their hours.

The GPO’s FY 2022 funding request will support services for FDLP libraries and the public by providing enhanced outreach and assistance with FDLP collections. The funding will also support the growth of the GPO’s partnerships with libraries to digitize, provide access to, and preserve federal government documents. Academic law libraries and public law libraries have successfully partnered with the GPO to expand digital access to essential legal materials and to preserve these materials, including the *Federal Register*, the *U.S. Statutes at Large*, the *U.S. Code*, and the *Congressional Record*. These partnerships are voluntary agreements that benefit the GPO, law libraries, and the public by providing increased access to and preservation of government information.

The GPO’s FY 2022 funding request will also allow the GPO to continue to invest in the infrastructure and development of the *govinfo* website. Law librarians and legal information professionals use this website to access official publications from all three branches of the federal government. The data in the *govinfo* website also supports [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov), the official website for U.S. federal legislative information.

### **Funding for the Library of Congress**

AALL urges the Subcommittee to support the Library of Congress’ FY 2022 funding request of approximately \$846 million. The Library of Congress’ FY 2022 request will support the Library of Congress’ information technology investments; enhance the



security of its buildings, collections, and workforce; and increase access to its valuable resources.

AALL supports the Library's \$17 million request for the Law Library of Congress. The Law Library of Congress holds a unique collection of foreign, comparative, international, and U.S. law. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Law Library of Congress has improved its services and optimized resources to meet the needs of its users in a mostly virtual environment. AALL appreciates the Law Library of Congress' continued efforts to digitize and archive its research reports and other U.S. and foreign legal collections. Law libraries rely on these free materials to support the research needs of their law library patrons, including self-represented litigants, students, attorneys, and judges.

AALL thanks the Subcommittee for its past support of the Law Library of Congress' funding requests, which has ensured greater online access to its digital collections. The Subcommittee's support has also allowed upgrades to the Law Library of Congress' storage facilities to better protect its physical collections.

The Law Library's FY 2022 funding will allow the Library of Congress to continue to replace the Law Library's outdated compact shelving units, which will enable the safe and efficient retrieval of materials from the basement stacks. The funding will also support greater access to the law collection through digitization and the reclassification of legal materials, which will allow users to find and use these materials more easily.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide written testimony on the FY 2022 funding requests of the U.S. Government Publishing Office and the Library of Congress. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information as you develop the FY 2022 Legislative Branch funding bill.