

**Written Testimony of Ms. Diane M. Rodriguez
President of the American Association of Law Libraries
For the Hearing Record**

**Fiscal Year 2023 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 16, 2022

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

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), an organization representing more than 3,500 law librarians and legal information professionals, I submit this testimony in support of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget requests of the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) and the Library of Congress.

During the past fiscal year, the GPO and the Library of Congress developed important digitization projects to make primary legal materials such as the *United States Congressional Serial Set* available for free to legal researchers; created new public resources including in-depth research guides on a variety of legal and government information topics; and established innovative alliances with federal agencies and libraries to improve online access to current and historical legal materials. Many academic law libraries and public law libraries partner with the GPO and the Law Library of Congress to digitize and to preserve core legal materials and other federal government publications, including the *United States Code* and the *Code of Federal Regulations*. These collaborations promote access to justice by making legal materials easier for legal researchers and the public to find, understand, and use.

The FY 2023 funding requests of the GPO and the Library of Congress will allow these agencies to continue to build valuable partnerships, accelerate digitization initiatives, and expand projects that provide greater access to legal information in print and online. We urge the Subcommittee to support the funding requests of the GPO and the Library of Congress.



Funding for the U.S. Government Publishing Office

AALL urges the Subcommittee to support the GPO's FY 2023 funding request of \$130.9 million. The request will fund the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and enable the GPO to add more collections of government documents from the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government to the *govinfo* website and digital repository.

Thanks to the Subcommittee's recent support, the GPO has built strategic partnerships with federal depository libraries and federal agencies to increase access to electronic federal information through the FDLP and *govinfo*. Funding also allowed the GPO to enhance the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications, which provides access to more than one million current and historic government titles and resources that are available to the public in FDLP libraries or linked to in digital collections.

The GPO's FY 2023 funding request supports the costs of providing federal government publications in digital and print formats to federal depository libraries, including 200 law libraries. AALL is delighted that several AALL members were invited to participate in the GPO's new task force to study the feasibility of an all-digital FDLP and to make recommendations about ways to make government information even more accessible in the future. This task force is timely as some law libraries have recently updated their collection development policies to emphasize selecting electronic resources over print materials because of changing user needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic or for other reasons.

The GPO's funding will also be used to develop the *govinfo* website. *Govinfo* is frequently used by academic law libraries and public law libraries to provide legal researchers with free access to official, authentic information from all three branches of the federal government. *Govinfo*'s collections of bills and statutes, executive agency publications, and court opinions are heavily used by legal researchers. Adding collections to the *govinfo* website will promote the principles of open, equitable, and reliable public access to legal information described in the *AALL Guiding Principles for Public Access to Legal Information on Government Websites (AALL Guiding Principles)*. AALL is proud that the GPO endorsed the *AALL Guiding Principles* in May 2021, and we are excited about the GPO's plans to further develop *govinfo*.

Funding for the Library of Congress

AALL urges the Subcommittee to support the Library of Congress' FY 2023 funding request of \$871.8 million, including \$17.6 million for the Law Library of Congress. This



request will lead to increased access to the Law Library of Congress' collections of legal materials in print and online.

The Subcommittee's recent support for the Law Library of Congress' funding requests has enabled the Law Library to digitize, preserve, and provide the public with access to many collections of legal materials from the United States and other countries. The Law Library of Congress' research reports on foreign, comparative, and international law topics are especially helpful to law librarians and legal information professionals because they provide information about evolving legal topics such as cryptocurrency and artificial intelligence along with links to primary sources. The Law Library of Congress' expansive collection of foreign official gazettes is also very useful to law librarians and legal information professionals because many of these materials are not available at other law libraries.

The Law Library of Congress' FY 2023 funding request will accelerate progress on the digitization of additional volumes of the *United States Congressional Serial Set* in partnership with the GPO and the digitization of the *U.S. Supreme Court Records and Briefs*. These publications are frequently used in law libraries but have not previously been available for free in digital formats. Digitizing these materials will help law libraries support the legal research needs of students, self-represented litigants, attorneys, and the public. The funding request will also allow the Law Library to continue to reclassify legal materials in its collection to make these materials more accessible.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the FY 2023 funding requests of the U.S. Government Publishing Office and the Library of Congress. We would be happy to provide any other information that may help you as you draft the FY 2023 Legislative Branch funding bill.