



**Outside Witness Testimony of  
Kathi Kromer, Associate Executive Director, American Library Association**

**On Funding for the Library of Congress and Government Publishing Office**

**Before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch  
May 3, 2019**

On behalf of the American Library Association, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony regarding Legislative Branch Appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. We respectfully request the Committee's support for funding for the Library of Congress and the Government Publishing Office, which provide valuable services to libraries and the public nationwide.

**Library of Congress**

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, with millions of books and other items in its collections. In addition to serving Congress, the Library is a resource to libraries across the country and the American public. The Library's proposed visitor experience enhancements would highlight its unique collections and inspire millions of visitors to learn, create, and innovate. In addition, the Library's services support education and research far beyond the walls of its buildings.

Through its National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, for instance, the Library of Congress serves readers who cannot see print or handle print materials. This national program provides access to books and reading materials for people across America, including through a network of regional libraries, such as the Mississippi Library Commission's Talking Book Services and the Connecticut State Library's Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

The Library of Congress also provides access to a wealth of information online for users nationwide. The Library is digitizing thousands of pages of its collections and records and making that information available to anyone with an Internet connection. For instance, digitizing historical copyright records will make it easier for users to identify the rightsholder or status of works that were registered with the Copyright Office. Additionally, every year the Library creates thousands of catalog records and shares them for the use of libraries around the country.

**Government Publishing Office**

The Government Publishing Office (GPO) provides essential information to America's businesses, legal system, and researchers. GPO's online repository of government information and the public information programs of GPO's Superintendent of Documents benefit users and libraries nationwide.

The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), administered by GPO, helps people access federal laws, regulations, and publications in communities across the nation. More than 1,100 libraries participate in the FDLP, such as the University of Southern Mississippi's Joseph Anderson Cook Memorial Library and the University of Connecticut's School of Law Library. Modernization legislation introduced in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress would further strengthen the program, if enacted; we hope that Congress will reintroduce and pass it in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, GPO annually adds thousands of new government publications to its free online repository, govinfo.gov. GPO also catalogs thousands of publications every year to assist researchers in locating them. To ensure that these important documents of our republic remain available over the long term, GPO manages a cooperative preservation program with libraries across the country.

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee in support of the FY 2020 requests of the Library of Congress and the Government Publishing Office. We ask for the Subcommittee's support in meeting the requests for these important national programs that serve Congress, libraries, and the American public.

Sincerely,

Kathi Kromer  
Associate Executive Director, Public Policy and Advocacy  
American Library Association

*The American Library Association ("ALA") is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library's role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all.*

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<sup>1</sup> FDLP Modernization Act of 2018, H.R. 5305, 115<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2018).