



American Library Association
Special Libraries Association
American Association of Law Libraries

April 21, 2005

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-218 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lewis:

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), the Special Libraries Association (SLA) and the American Library Association (ALA), we write in support of the FY 2006 appropriations request for the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). Collectively, our three associations represent thousands of individuals and institutions serving communities located in nearly every congressional district. We also represent over 90% of the nearly 1300 libraries that partner with GPO in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Our libraries serve all your constituents at every economic and educational level, including underrepresented populations.

AALL is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5,000 members dedicated to promoting and enhancing the value of law libraries, fostering law librarianship and providing leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy. SLA is a nonprofit global organization that serves more than 12,000 members in 83 countries in the information profession, including corporate, academic and government information specialists. ALA is a nonprofit educational organization of 64,000 librarians, library trustees, and other friends of libraries dedicated to improving library services and promoting the public interest in a free and open information society.

FY 2006 Budget Request

We are pleased to submit a statement for the record in support of the FY 2006 appropriations for the Government Printing Office and the Superintendent of Documents Salaries and Expenses. We urge your support for the Public Printer's FY 2006 budget request of \$131,120,000 for the GPO that includes \$33,837,000 for the Salaries and Expenses (S&E) Appropriation of the Superintendent of Documents and \$92,283,000 for the Congressional Printing and Binding (CP&B) Appropriation. The S&E request includes \$27 million to fund the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), \$5 million for the Cataloging and Indexing Program, and \$2 million for the International Exchange Program. This amount includes necessary increases to support the continued operation of the FDLP, its continuing electronic transition plans and the increased demands upon *GPO Access*.

We urge you to approve the full S&E appropriations request for FY 2006. The majority of the S&E appropriation is for the FDLP, through which congressional and other important Government

publications and information products are disseminated to participating academic, public, law, Federal, and other libraries nationwide. We fully support GPO's transition to a more electronic FDLP and strongly urge you to support GPO's continuing effort to replace obsolete technology and to upgrade the retrieval system for *GPO Access*. An improved *GPO Access* is of crucial importance to the thousands of Americans who rely on it each day for no-fee access to the essential government information they need.

We also support GPO's funding request needed to develop the Future Digital System. This system holds the promise of ensuring reliable version control, authenticity, permanent public access and preservation of electronic government information. However, until this system is developed, tested, and fully operational, GPO must continue to use S&E appropriations to produce and distribute tangible products to depository libraries. Today only print and microfiche are the trusted and authenticated formats for permanent access to and preservation of important government information.

The FDLP and *GPO Access* are vital to the dissemination and acquisition of Federal government information by our citizens. We believe that the FY 2006 S&E budget request is essential to the continued transition to a more electronic program and the continued success of *GPO Access*. Since GPO is responsible for permanent public access to the content of its Electronic Collection, funding to strengthen long-term preservation of authenticated digital formats for use by future generations is a critically important component.

FDLP Libraries' Significant Services and Investments

Each participating federal depository library makes significant investments to ensure that the public has effective access to government information. For example, FDLP libraries pay for technologies and infrastructure to house and preserve collections that assist citizens in accessing government information in all formats. Additionally, depository libraries bear the cost of providing expert assistance, necessary supplemental materials, and Internet access to your constituents. These investments exemplify the substantial costs that participating depository libraries incur in order to provide your constituents with equitable, ready, efficient and no-fee access to government information in both print and electronic formats.

Federal depository libraries serve as important channels of public access to government publications and contribute significantly to the success of this Program. The government's responsibility to make government publications in both tangible and electronic formats available to depository libraries is successful because of the necessary partnerships developed between the Federal government, the GPO, and the Federal depository libraries. In order for GPO to continue to increase the amount of government information available for current and future public access through the Internet and in order for the Federal Government to fulfill its responsibilities for this partnership, it is critically important that Congress provide adequate funds to support the transition to a more electronic program.

Importance of Funding for the CP&B


We also urge your support for the Public Printer's request of \$92,283,000 for the Congressional Printing and Binding (CP&B) appropriation. Broad public access to legislative information, including the *Congressional Record*, the text of bills, as well as committee hearings, reports, documents and other legislative materials, is crucial to the ability of our citizenry to engage in the political process. Indeed, recent polls have demonstrated the public's increasing awareness of and thirst for information from their government, including Congress. Full support for the CP&B request will ensure the necessary electronic infrastructure to make congressional materials available in a timely manner for permanent accessibility through *GPO Access* and will maintain GPO's in-plant printing operation for Congress.

Chairman Lewis, we are very grateful to you and to members of the Committee for your past support of *GPO Access*, the Federal Depository Library Program and GPO's Congressional Printing and Binding services. The investment in systems and services to provide the public with government publications in print, microfiche and digital formats will ensure that valuable government information created today will be available and preserved for future generations. Funding for all formats must be continued until the GPO's Future Digital System is fully operational. We respectfully urge your continued support by approving the Government Printing Office's FY 2006 appropriations request in its entirety. We ask that you please include this statement as part of the recent hearing record and we look forward to working with you. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Emily Sheketoff
Executive Director
American Library Association Washington Office



Doug Newcomb, CAE
Director Public Policy
Special Libraries Association



Mary Alice Baish
Associate Washington Affairs Representative
American Association of Law Libraries

The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5,000 members nationwide. AALL's mission is to promote and enhance the value of law libraries to the legal and public communities, to foster the profession of law librarianship, and to provide leadership in the field of legal information and information policy.

The American Library Association (ALA) is a nonprofit educational organization of over 65,000 librarians, library trustees, and other friends of libraries dedicated to improving library services and promoting the public interest in a free and open information society.

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) is a nonprofit, educational organization serving more than 12,000 members of the information profession, including special librarians, information managers, brokers, and consultants.