



American Association of Law Libraries

MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF THE LAW LIBRARY COMMUNITY SINCE 1906

Oral Statement of

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American Association of Law Libraries**

**On Behalf of the
American Association of Law Libraries**

**Legislative Branch Subcommittee Public Witness Hearing
House Committee on Appropriations
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Madam Chair Wasserman Schultz, Ranking Member Aderholt, and members of the Subcommittee.

On behalf of the American Association of Law Libraries, I am here today to urge you to fund, in its entirety, the FY 2011 Budget request for GPO submitted by Public Printer Robert Tapella. In my limited time this morning, I would like to address four key issues that are especially important to our members.

First, we urge you to fund fully the Congressional Printing and Binding request. Congressional materials are core documents of our democracy and federal depository libraries must have the option of receiving them in print. It has been reported to me that the Library of Congress accepts paper or microfiche as the only recognized archival formats. While the Library of Congress is making good progress in collaborative international research on how to preserve digital content, there are no guarantees that today's electronic government information will be available in 10, 50 or 100 years.

Second, we applauded the first release of FDsys as a public beta a year ago. Our members are very pleased with its improved search capabilities and the additional collections that have been added since then. We believe that the complete migration of the GPO Access system into FDsys must be a top priority. We are especially anxious for the entire electronic *Code of Federal Regulations* (e-CFR), available today through GPO Access, to be migrated into FDsys because it is such an important title for legal researchers. We urge you to fund FDsys at \$8,000,000 in FY 2011 to achieve this goal.

We also urge you to provide the necessary funding for GPO to replace old legacy systems with 21st century technologies. There was a very unfortunate incident in late August when GPO's PURL (persistent URL) server had a significant failure. It took weeks for GPO to restore the hardware, the system configuration and URL resolutions. Fortunately, no data was lost but, during that time period, depository library patrons were unable to access thousands of electronic government documents, linked to from their library's online catalog, which had not been distributed in print.

My purpose in mentioning this incident is to urge you to make sure that GPO has in place a mirror site, high-secure back-up system or other scheme so that we know that the entire content of FDsys will always remain permanently available to the public.

Third, the digitization of historic government documents for no-fee permanent public access is an important initiative. We are pleased that GPO is becoming more active in encouraging formal partnerships through which depository libraries and others do the digital scanning. Ideally, if the files meet GPO's high preservation standards, they could be ingested into FDsys.

We believe it would be a very good deal for the American taxpayer if GPO and the Library of Congress would enter into a formal MOU to partner on the digitization of historic legal resources. The Law Library has already digitized the entire series of the *U.S. Statutes at Large* and other titles. If GPO would create the necessary metadata, these files could be made available through both FDsys and LC's THOMAS system.

GPO and LC are already collaborating on the digitization of the pre-1994 volumes of the *Congressional Record*, with GPO donating some print volumes and LC producing the digital images. We would like to see this important partnership between two legislative branch agencies formalized and expanded.

Fourth, as part of their mission to provide access to current government information, we would like GPO to begin to capture content from agency Web sites to be ingested into FDsys. It is a fact that agency born digital materials made publicly available on the Web are at the greatest risk of disappearing and being lost forever. We believe that capturing agency content that is within the scope of the Federal Depository Library Program is, in fact, the digital equivalent of GPO's print publishing role since the agency was established in 1860.

Thank you very much for the invitation to appear before you this morning. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have and look forward to submitting a detailed long statement to the Subcommittee.