

**Statement of Dr. Carla Hayden
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Before the Committee on House Administration
United States House of Representatives**

“Oversight of the Operations of the Library of Congress”

May 6, 2025

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the invitation to appear before the Committee on House Administration (Committee) to provide an update on the programs and activities of the Library of Congress (Library).

Since I appeared before you last summer, the Library has advanced many key initiatives of importance to the Congress and other users in furtherance of its mission, which is to “Engage, inspire and inform the Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.” This mission statement reflects the Library’s commitment to the goals of expanding access, enhancing services, strengthening capacity, and fostering innovation for the benefit of our users, foremost among whom are the Members of Congress we serve each day as an agency of the Legislative Branch and as your library.

The Library’s strategic goals facilitate key organizational themes set forth in the *Fiscal Years 2024-2028 Strategic Plan: A Library for All*, which affirms the Library’s mission of service and fortifies our recognition that technology must be baked into all that we do. To meet modern challenges, the Library’s strategic vision for its present and future leverages digital technology and spotlights a variety of ways to connect with individuals using a user-centered approach. This vision enables us to keep pace in a rapidly changing world, effectively connecting with users near and far, fostering innovation to efficiently steward our unique content and services. For example, the Library continues to expand the accessibility of its resources, providing the Congress a direct line to analysis, policy consultations, and briefings through the dedicated work of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the Law Library of Congress, and many other programs and services. The U.S. Copyright Office within the Library promotes creativity and knowledge by administering the nation’s copyright system for the benefit of all. Our services and programs also provide Members of Congress additional opportunities to increase their engagement with their constituents utilizing resources such as the Veterans History Project – a program that last fiscal year enabled 88 congressional offices to collect and digitize the stories of veterans who have bravely served their country.

Each year, the Library’s talented and dedicated staff endeavors to find new and better ways to carry out our mission. With more than 181 million physical items and a growing digital collection, the Library takes tremendous pride in its role as the steward of the national collection and a repository for our shared cultural heritage. We are providing more programs and services than ever before while modernization and automation have allowed us to expand productivity in some areas and to do more with less. Indeed, the Library’s staffing level has remained largely unchanged since fiscal year (fiscal)

2015 even as we continue to meet our responsibility to preserve and share our holdings, renew our collections, and serve the Congress in a fast and dynamic environment.

Service to the Congress and Its Constituents

I have had the pleasure of engaging with many of the Members of this committee and your colleagues thus far into the 119th Congress. In particular, the partnership with the Committee to host the New Member Seminar for freshman Members in Williamsburg, Virginia allowed for such engagement and I am truly appreciative of your support of the Library and CRS to continue this invaluable endeavor well into the future. Further, it is my sincere hope that every Member of Congress will take the opportunity to use our collections and services, as well as connect our vast resources to their constituents across the nation. Service to the Congress remains at the foundation of the Library's mission.

Last week the Library of Congress celebrated its 225th anniversary since its founding by Congress in 1800. Almost as old as the country itself, the Library provides the Congress access to a collection of information that, at present day, is unparalleled anywhere in the world. Our law specialists and law librarians conduct research on domestic, foreign, comparative and international law for Members of Congress. Researchers expand their knowledge using collections from the papers of the Founding Fathers, oral histories from the American Folklife Center, and various holdings from our digital collections. Families research their ancestry using our genealogy resources, and curious booklovers everywhere attend events or tune into our virtual programming and author talks.

In fiscal 2024, the Library supported Members of Congress and their staff in a variety of ways, from providing reference material, research, and analysis on key issues to supplying resources for constituents in congressional districts around the country. Each year, the Library responds to thousands of reference requests from Congress, the public, and other federal agencies. CRS continued to fulfill its mission “to serve Congress with the highest quality of research, analysis, information, and confidential consultation, to support the exercise of its legislative, representational, and oversight duties...,” handling over 75,000 congressional requests, publishing over 1,000 new products, and updating over 1,700 existing products. Law Library staff responded to nearly 1,100 research and reference inquiries from Congress. The Library's Congressional Relations Office organized over 370 congressional events, displays and tours, as well as engaged every Member office both in person and digitally, delivering over 66,000 specialized outreach emails to Members and staff. And Library staff responded to 135,679 reference requests, about 60 percent of these requests came online or by email, with about 46,000 requests made in person.

The Library also serves its many public users through a variety of programs, services, exhibits, and virtual offerings. In fiscal 2024, the Library welcomed more than 883,000 visitors to its historic Thomas Jefferson Building, a 22 percent increase from fiscal 2023, and for those who could not visit in person, our robust digital presence recorded over 98 million unique visitors to the Library's websites and more than half a billion page views. The Library reached nearly 27,000 attendees through over 200 virtual, hybrid and on-site lectures and symposia. One of our most popular programs, the Veterans History Project, created by a unanimous congressional mandate 25 years ago, has since collected more than 120,000 individual collections, spanning from World War I to recent conflicts.

Our By the People volunteer transcription program continued its impressive track record of direct user engagement. During fiscal 2024, volunteers transcribed over 166,000 pages from the Library's collections, adding nearly 346,000 individual transcriptions to loc.gov and bringing the lifetime total of volunteer-created transcriptions available for enhancing search and accessibility to over 866,000. And the Library assessed over 350,000 items for preservation treatments, in addition to the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) circulating more than 22 million copies of braille, audio, and large-print material.

We also inspire authors, musicians, and other creatives who engage with our collections, as well as ensure they can register their works for copyright protection through the U.S. Copyright Office. Processing times for the Copyright Office's core services of registration and recordation stand at historic lows. Specifically, the Copyright Office issued more than 424,000 copyright registrations in fiscal 2024, with the average examination time for all copyright claims standing at 1.9 months for the second half of fiscal 2024. For fully electronic claims that did not require correspondence, the average was just 1.2 months. For recordation, the Copyright Office recorded 16,971 documents containing titles of 1,738,530 works. And with the Copyright Office serving as the custodian of records related to registration and recordation, efforts continued to make such records available online, many going back more than a hundred years, bringing the current total to 3.5 million physical records available in the Copyright Public Records System (CPRS).

Continuous Development of Technology for a Digitally-Enabled Library

With congressional support, the Library is extensively modernizing and optimizing its systems, processes, and staff. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the ongoing and extraordinary support the Congress gives to the Library. I especially appreciate the support Congress has provided for major Information Technology (IT) investments that we are implementing and continuously improving to meet user expectations for greater access and new and enhanced tools.

The Library never stops its drive to engage, inspire and inform, increasingly through digital means. This last fiscal year, the Library achieved major progress toward its implementation of the new Library Collections Access Platform (LCAP), which will modernize core library function operations including cataloging and collection acquisition, and serve as the heart of the Library's collections discovery, description, and management operations. LCAP will ultimately enable users to seamlessly discover and access all collections materials, whether the content is digital or physical, owned by the Library or licensed. The Library is on target to launch this fully integrated library system for internal and external use over the next year.

Other IT priorities include the Copyright Office's new Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), which continues to be a top focus and a strategic goal. Congress' support for ECS modernization and continuous development means that the Copyright Office can build a more accessible, intuitive system for those who interact with the U.S. copyright system and rely on the Copyright Office's technology to register and license works, or search for and document records related to copyrighted materials and their ownership. The Library's agile IT development model means the system will be continuously developed with regular updates and improvements to avoid repeating the experience of having to overhaul severely outdated legacy systems. ECS includes four main components – Registration,

Recordation, Public Records, and Licensing. The online Recordation system was the first ECS component to be released to the public in 2022 when we replaced a legacy paper-based system used to record documents related to copyright ownership. The second ECS component to be publicly released was a pilot for the new CPRS, which provides access to registration and recordation data with advanced search capabilities, filters, and improved interfaces. The CPRS will be the Copyright Office's sole source of authoritative online copyright information by summer 2025. In March, the Copyright Office activated an internal Licensing component into production to assist the Copyright Office's Licensing section in serving the public by administering the Copyright Act's various statutory licenses. And lastly, development on Registration, the largest and most complex component of ECS, is being accelerated to replace the existing online registration system, the Electronic Copyright Office or "eCO." In late 2024, the Copyright Office and the Library's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) initiated a limited pilot of both the eDeposit upload functionality and the new interface and functionality of the most commonly used registration form, the Standard Application. Pilot test sessions have thus far resulted in uniformly positive reaction, with comments noting that the difference between the current system and the proposed model is "like night and day." In fact, the Library recently held a meeting of the Copyright Public Modernization Committee, a group created to enhance communication with external stakeholders about ECS development and other technology-related Copyright Office initiatives. I am pleased to share that the feedback related to the Registration application limited pilot was overwhelmingly positive during that meeting as well.

We are also making significant progress modernizing the technology that powers CRS service to Congress. CRS continues to work closely with the OCIO to modernize its core IT systems. This includes last week's release of a newly redesigned CRS.gov website that includes an enhanced taxonomy and a new search capability. Additionally, last fiscal year CRS rolled out a new and improved Text Analysis Program (TAP 2.0) that uses Natural Language Processing to research, analyze, compare, and summarize bills and supports the "Related Bills" feature on Congress.gov.

CRS also continues to move forward with the full migration of its systems into the cloud-based M365 platform. In partnership with the OCIO, the CRS has implemented more than 100 improvements to its congressional relationship management system ("Minerva") since initial deployment in 2023. In addition, CRS continued the migration of its authoring and publishing and content management systems into the M365 environment. All these enhancements are preparing CRS' IT infrastructure to support Congress' research, analysis, and consultation needs now and into the future.

Across the Library there has been great progress around technology modernization and continued IT development. Our staff is working steadily to support a digitally enabled, future innovation-focused Library where IT applications are constantly iterated upon to remain up-to-date once developed. To reach this goal, it is important to maintain the momentum on these important projects to the benefit of Congress, public users, creative communities, and more.

Enriching the Visitor Experience

The Library is continuing to make great progress with the Visitor Experience initiative in partnership with the Architect of the Capitol, and we are particularly grateful to the Congress for its ongoing support as we deliver components of the project.

For over 125 years, the Library has been committed to the protection and preservation of the Thomas Jefferson Building, a national treasure in its own right. Given its scale and complexity, this transformation has required a dynamic collaboration between the public and private sectors, and among our authorization and appropriations committees in Congress. As I testified to last year, we opened the first components of the Visitor Experience initiative with the David M. Rubenstein Treasures Gallery, an extraordinary space that gives visitors an up-close look at a selection of the Library's greatest treasures, as well as the Library's new Gift Shop, which flanks both wings of the First Floor of the Great Hall.

Next to be delivered is a youth center, which is expected to open this December. Named "the Source," this component of the Visitor Experience received input from an advisory group of young people, including a number of congressional children and grandchildren. Our hope is that it will attract new audiences who will interact with the collection and exercise their creativity.

The Architect of the Capitol has begun construction on the last component of the project, the Orientation Gallery, which is expected to open in early 2027. This space will include Thomas Jefferson's Library; a look into the stacks for all those visitors who wonder where and how we store the world's largest book collection; 8,600 new square feet of exhibit space to help better tell the Library's story; and engaging media interactives.

We look forward to delivering on this congressionally driven initiative in the months and years ahead in partnership with Congress and the Architect of the Capitol. Congress' support, this Committee's direct involvement with monthly briefings and bi-weekly reporting since January 2023, along with the close collaboration of Architect of the Capitol Thomas E. Austin and his team, are a testament to the collective desire to further the legacy of the collection and ensure future generations of Americans can continue to enjoy the splendor of our deep rich history. I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee, our partners and other stakeholders as we complete the remaining elements of this project over the next two years.

Legislative Authorities Update

The Library is requesting several changes in our legislative authorities this year to help us enhance our services to Congress, streamline and improve our operations, and maximize efficiencies in achieving our mission. This includes language to permanently reauthorize the National Film and Sound Recording Preservation Programs before they expire in 2026. We are also seeking legislative changes to: make our transfer authority process with the Architect of the Capitol more efficient for Library buildings and grounds projects; create a dedicated revolving fund to manage long-term fiscal planning for signature programs; and promote a more efficient way to deliver the Constitution Annotated to Congress by discontinuing its printed hardbound version in favor of the continuously updated digital resource available on constitution.congress.gov. I am very appreciative of the Committee's efforts with H.R. 1234 and I look forward to further working with you on moving these other important initiatives forward this Congress.

Conclusion

This past year, the Library has been quite busy serving Congress and its constituents, implementing its strategic vision, and enhancing its IT capabilities. I thank this Committee for its continued interest and support and look forward to remaining closely engaged with you throughout the 119th Congress and hearing your input about how the Library can continue to advance its mission. With your support, the national collection will continue to be an unmatched resource both within the Legislative Branch and in states and districts throughout the country.