

**Testimony of
Gavin Baker, Deputy Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
American Library Association**

On Funding for the Library of Congress and Government Publishing Office

**Before the House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Public Witness Hearing for Fiscal Year 2021
March 4, 2020**

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

On behalf of the American Library Association, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony regarding Legislative Branch Appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. We respectfully request the Committee's support 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, a shining example of our nation's commitment to preserving and advancing American culture. The Library serves not only Congress, but also libraries across the country and the American public.

The Library's planned Visitor Experience Initiative 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 activities such as the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled and the Veterans History Project.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled serves readers who cannot see print or handle print materials. This national program provides access to books and reading materials through a network of regional libraries, such as the Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled and the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library. The network serves readers across America, circulating more than 21 million books and magazines in FY 2019.

The Veterans History Project collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal stories of American veterans. The nation's largest oral history project, the Veterans History Project added more than 3,000 new collections in FY 2019.

Government Publishing Office

The Government Publishing Office provides essential information to America's businesses, legal system, and researchers. The Office serves users across the country through the Federal Depository Library Program, its online repository of government information, and its other public information programs.

The Federal Depository Library Program helps Americans access federal laws, regulations, and publications in communities across the nation. More than 1,100 libraries participate in the program, including as the Kent State University Library in Ohio and the Fort Vancouver Regional Library in Washington. Bipartisan modernization legislation introduced in the 115th Congress would further strengthen the program, if enacted; we hope that the 116th Congress will reintroduce and pass it.¹

In addition, the Office annually adds thousands of new government publications to its free online repository, govinfo.gov, and catalogs thousands of publications every year to assist researchers in locating them. To preserve these important documents of our republic, 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 Fiscal Year 2021 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,

Gavin Baker
Deputy Director, Public Policy and Government Relations
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.

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