

**Statement of
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**on behalf of the American Library Association
Association of Research Libraries
American Association of Law Libraries
Medical Library Association and
Special Libraries Association**

**before the Subcommittee on Legislative,
House Committee on Appropriations**

on the FY 1999 Appropriations for the Library of Congress

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I am Patricia A. Wand, University Librarian at the American University and I am appearing today on behalf of the [American Library Association](#), the [Association of Research Libraries](#), the [American Association of Law Libraries](#), the [Medical Library Association](#), and the [Special Libraries Association](#). ALA is a nonprofit educational organization of 57,000 librarians, library trustees, and other friends of libraries dedicated to promoting the public interest in a free and open information society. AALL is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5,000 members dedicated to serving the legal information needs of legislators and other public officials, law professors, and students, attorneys, and members of the general public. ARL is an Association of 121 research libraries in North America. ARL programs and services promote equitable access to and effective use of recorded knowledge in support of teaching, research, scholarship, and community service. The Medical Library Association is an organization of over 3,800 individuals and 1,200 institutions in the health sciences information field. MLA members serve society by developing new information delivery systems, fostering educational and research programs for health sciences information professionals, and encouraging an enhanced public awareness of health care issues. The SLA is the international association representing the interests of information professionals in 60 countries. Special librarians are information resource experts dedicated to putting knowledge to work to attain the goals of their organizations. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Legislative, a Subcommittee that has a long history of support for the Library of Congress.

Mr. Chairman, since the beginning of this decade, we have witnessed an extraordinary occurrence - the development and growth of the World Wide Web and the adoption of the Internet by millions of individuals around the globe. In the United States, the growing acceptance of these mediums signals a fundamental shift in how we communicate, educate, and participate in the democratic process. Libraries have and will continue to play a pivotal role in creating, providing, and maintaining long term access to these communications channels and to the resources that flow over them. We engage in these efforts to ensure that all sectors benefit from these resources and that importantly, the content is available not only today but to future generations.

There are some common themes that libraries of all types experience in operating in this digital environment. It is a time to maintain current services with increasing budget pressures and shifting priorities. It is a time of transition to networked-based services while users demand concurrent delivery or expect ongoing information services. Finally, it is a time when users are clamoring for libraries and all providers to rethink their roles in this new information economy.

The Library of Congress, with other libraries throughout the United States, invests in new technologies to promote access to a diverse array of information resources to the public throughout the United States. Programs and activities such as the National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, those relating to preservation and cataloging, and electronic information services such as the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN) and the National Digital Library, all serve constituencies throughout the Nation. These and other programs of the Library merit the support of the Subcommittee on Legislative and its Members.

Managing the transformation from primarily a print to a print and networked-based environment requires continued and sustained investment in infrastructure programs such as acquisitions, technology-based programs, and in human resources. The Library of Congress FY 1999 budget request of \$369.3 million (including the authority to obligate \$27.7 million in receipts) positions the Library to realize the benefits of the digital networked environment while ensuring that important programs and services are maintained. This request would fund mandatory increases, provide the necessary continuity for many programs, and target selected strategic technological activities such as the Integrated Library System (ILS).

I will focus my remarks on six LC program areas :

- Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped;
- Technology Initiatives;
- Law Library;
- Arrearage Reduction and Cooperative Cataloging;
- American Folklife Center; and
- Security Measures

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) is a critically important service to the Nation. This national library service provides recorded and braille materials to hundreds of thousands of blind and physically handicapped persons throughout the United States and is accomplished via a cooperative network of 140 regional, subregional libraries (state, regional, and public libraries throughout the nation) and two multi-state centers that circulate these resources to eligible borrowers by postage-free mail. Some 23 million items are borrowed annually. The network of libraries also serves as distribution points for specialized playback equipment and accessories. We support the minimum request to purchase approximately 56,000 cassette book machines to ensure the availability of these machines for the blind and physically handicapped individuals. The Library anticipates that an additional 5,000 cassette book machines will be needed to meet the ever growing demand. We strongly encourage that funds be provided to support the purchase of additional machines if necessary.

Technology Initiatives

Mr. Chairman, in a very short amount of time we have made important strides in designing networked-based, distributed programs of access to library collections throughout the country, and indeed the world. One indication of how libraries are meeting this pressing demand for online services are statistics demonstrating the investments that we have made in these services. The expenditures for

electronic serials, computer files, and search services in ARL libraries has nearly tripled in the last two years and the percentage of expenditures devoted to electronic resources has almost doubled between 1993 and 1996. In less than two years, transactions via the Library's National Digital Library have grown from one million per year to two million per day. Thus, to meet our shared goals of achieving the vision of access to the vast array of human knowledge, will require sustained support of technology initiatives and human resource programs while keeping a watchful eye on other infrastructure programs such as acquisitions.

We support the Library's request for FY 1999 funding for automation projects including new computer workstations and equipment, computer security, anticipating Year 2000 improvements, and more. These requests individually and collectively will permit the Library to move ahead in a more effective and efficient manner to meet the challenges of the networked environment.

Law Library

The Law Library, the Federal Government's only comprehensive legal research collection, has as its mission to make its legal reference and collections services available to members of Congress, to the Judicial and Executive branches of government, and to the American public. With a unique collection that covers over 200 foreign jurisdictions, the Law Library annually serves more than 100,000 users. In the digital arena, the Law Library has been a leader in developing the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN), a multinational legal database which is expected to increase to 15-20 participating nations by 1999 with an eventual goal of between 40-50.

We urge your full support for the Law Library's FY 1999 budget request of \$6.7 million. Since 1992, the Law Library has lost ten FTEs and this request includes the much needed increase to fund eight FTEs. These positions are necessary if the Law Library is to maintain effective levels of research and reference services. In addition, the request includes \$340,201 which would support the Law Library's automation projects such as GLIN.

American Folklife Center

The American Folklife Center and its Archive of Folk Culture are a unique national resource of sound recordings, photographs, histories, and traditions that document the threads that make up our distinctly American society. The Center undertakes an important role in preserving and presenting American folklife to the Nation. ARL, ALA, AALL, MLA, and SLA strongly endorse permanent reauthorization for the Center. This would permit the Library and the Center to engage in establishing priorities for the growth of the collection and expand the fundraising activities to support the Center programs. In addition, such a reauthorization would send an important signal indicating Congress' appreciation of true significance of this collection. We stand ready to work with Members of the Subcommittee and others to move forward in support of this important effort.

Arrearage Reduction and Cooperative Cataloging

The Library of Congress, in cooperation with others in the library community, continues to reduce the volume of unprocessed materials, permitting access to yet more resources. The Library reduced the arrearages this year by another million items; a reduction of 50% since 1989. It is important to note that the Library has achieved this reduction while keeping current with the cataloging of new acquisitions. Cooperative programs with others in the library community, and in particular, the utilization of cataloging copy from other institutions are responsible for these significant reductions. Even greater efficiencies and productivity are anticipated with the full implementation of the ILS.

Security Measures

For several years, the Library has been engaged in evaluating a host of security issues associated with

its collection, facilities, and importantly for the staff and visitors to the institution. Recognizing the critical importance of providing appropriate measures to ensure the safety of all of these, the Library developed a security plan that addresses the concerns raised during this extensive review. We support the Library's request for approximately \$2.5 million to improve its security including the hiring of additional staff to implement these new proposals and the related security requests for the Library that are included in the Architect of the Capitol budget request.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, as we approach the millennium, we should work to ensure that the public benefits from our Nation's cultural resources as well as from the global information resources that the Library acquires. Funding to assist the Library in strengthening its infrastructure is a key step in meeting this important goal. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee today. ARL, ALA, AALL, MLA, and SLA look forward to working with you. We very much appreciate your continuing support for the Library and its programs.