I am Patricia A. Wand, University Librarian, 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. Collectively, these five associations represent over 65,000 individuals and thousands of institutions and organizations serving communities throughout the Nation. I appreciate the opportunity to appear again before the Subcommittee on Legislative. This Subcommittee is to be commended for its support for the Library of Congress and the Library's many programs which benefit citizens throughout the United States.

Mr. Chairman, in the last four years digital resources have grown exponentially. The Internet has faced equally significant growth, introducing new users to the increasingly rich content available through libraries, educational institutions, organizational Intranets, commercial providers and others. What once captured the imagination of librarians, scholars, educators and policy makers is now an essential element in library services across the Nation. Yet, we are just beginning to fully appreciate the potential of the digital networked environment and its impact on libraries and their missions. But what is already clear is that libraries play a pivotal role in creating, providing, and maintaining long-term access to digital resources. Libraries of all types actively promote and invest in networked-based programs and services to ensure that all sectors benefit from meaningful access to digital resources and that importantly, these information resources are available to future generations.

The Library of Congress' digital initiatives demonstrate the enormous value of and demand for providing public access to the growing body of digital resources. In 1998, the Library's Internet site received over 3 million hits every day. The use of Thomas, the Library's website for legislative information, is equally impressive. In 1995, when Thomas first went online, users visited the website approximately 6.5 million times. Last year, more than 40.5 million users accessed legislative information via Thomas -- an increase of nearly 625% in four years. Thomas is just one of several examples of how the Library is poised to meet the challenges of the digital environment.
The Library of Congress and other libraries throughout the United States make enormous investments in new and evolving technologies which facilitate access to a vast array of information resources. The combination of these local investments and the Library's enhanced technological infrastructure make Library of Congress resources broadly available throughout the Nation, indeed the world. As we approach the Library's Bicentennial in the year 2000, programs such as the National Library Services (NLS) 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, merit the full and continued support of the Subcommittee on Legislative.

The Library budget request of $383.7 million (including the authority to obligate $33.1 million in receipts) provides the needed support for the Library to maintain current programs while continuing to make investments in networked-based projects. Although this request represents a 5.5% increase in the Library's budget, it is important to note that a significant share of this increase is slated for mandatory costs. New funds will support key infrastructure projects such as automation, security, and importantly, a staff succession program.

I will focus my remarks on five LC program areas:

- Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped;
- Technology Initiatives;
- Law Library;
- Security Measures; and
- Staff Succession Program.

**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 over 773,000 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 request of $48,033,000 in Fiscal Year 2000 for the NLS and the effort to explore the use of digital technologies to assist the NLS in achieving its notable mission.

**Technology Initiatives**

Mr. Chairman, all libraries face many challenges in seeking to realize the benefits and the potential of the digital environment. The rapid pace of technological change, the extraordinary demand by all sectors to utilize the Internet, the changing skill base in our institutions, and the growth of digital resources, are all factors pressing libraries to explore, evaluate, and implement new networked-based programs. Investments in a library's technological infrastructure are instrumental to the success of meeting the digital challenge.

The Library is requesting funds to support a number of technological initiatives which are necessary in order to continue to effectively deliver information services to Congress and the Nation. Two key automation projects include continued funding of the Integrated Library System (ILS) which will more efficiently coordinate basic functions of the Library such as acquisitions, cataloging, and research and loan services; and the Electronic Resources Information Project which will facilitate the transition to an increasingly electronic future through new approaches to handling digital materials.

We support the Library's request for a FY 2000 funding increase of $4.2 million for automation projects. This request will permit the Library to effectively and efficiently meet the challenges of the
digital networked environment by addressing selected operational requirements and the increased
demands for electronic services.

**Law Library**

The mission of the Law Library of Congress is to provide legal and legislative reference and collection
services to Congress, the Judicial and Executive branches of government, and to the American public.
The Law Library serves a critically important role as the Federal Government's only comprehensive
legal and legislative research collection. With this extensive collection, 2.2 million volumes, of United
States federal and state, international, comparative and foreign law covering over 200 jurisdictions, and
with a uniquely skilled staff competent in foreign and international law and legal systems of the world
and 50 languages, the Law Library serves more than 100,000 users each year. In addition, the Law
Library serves a rapidly increasing number of remote users with electronic legal and legislative
information through its web site, recording some 1.2 million digital transactions last year.

The Law Library currently is engaged in two important digital library initiatives: the Global Legal
Information Network, known as GLIN, and its National Digital Library project, entitled "A Century of
Lawmaking for a New Nation, U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1873." With your
support, the Law Library continues to enhance GLIN, a multinational legal database of official, current
foreign law resources that is uniquely important to our government in the rapidly changing global
economy. Full funding for GLIN is imperative to expand the number of participating nations to at least
twenty in FY 2000, and to expand its content by digitizing more retrospective materials and adding
new categories of specialized legal resources. "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation" offers
unprecedented public access to historical congressional debates and documents. In addition to the
congressional debates of the first forty-two federal Congresses (1789-1873), the project also includes
the debates and laws of the Continental Congress, the records of the Federal Convention, and the
debates on the ratification of the Constitution.

We urge your full support for the Law Library's FY 2000 budget request of $8,005,971. This will
permit the Law Library to continue to provide a high level of service and to increase remote access to
unique digital legal information.

**Security Measures**

Mr. Chairman, we thank the Congress for its support of the Library's efforts to enhance the security of
its collections and for its staff. All libraries face significant challenges in ensuring the safety of their
staff and collections. The supplemental appropriation of $16,975,000 will permit the Library to take
much needed measures such as recruitment of additional security personnel, acquisition of security
equipment, and the like. But an additional nominal amount is required to both complement and
complete these efforts. We support the request of $1,352,201 to support reader registration, tagging of
library materials, and additional security monitors in selected reading rooms. These additional monies
should address remaining security concerns within the Library.

**Staff Succession Program**

The Library of Congress faces an unprecedented loss of talented staff through retirement. In addition,
the Library has identified the need for a program to facilitate the promotion of technicians to
professional positions. Support for the staff succession program is a critically important component of
the Library's ability to effectively provide information services in the next century. Maintaining a
talented and diverse staff with technological skills and ensuring appropriate advancement while
recruiting new staff, is a challenge that all libraries face. We support the Library's request for funds to
formulate a framework for a smooth transition to address the changing personnel situation at the
Library.
Conclusion

In closing, Mr. Chairman, as the Library of Congress celebrates 200 years of service to the Congress and the people of the Nation, we take this opportunity to reaffirm our support for this important national institution. We look forward to working with the Library in celebration of its bicentennial where libraries will join the Library in highlighting local legacies and the role of libraries in communities throughout the Nation. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee today. AALL, ALA, ARL, MLA, and SLA look forward to working with you. We very much appreciate your continuing support for the Library and its programs.

The American Library Association is a nonprofit educational organization of 57,000 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 American Association of Law Libraries 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.

The Association of Research Libraries is an Association of 122 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 Special Libraries Association is an international association representing the interests of nearly 15,000 information professionals in 60 countries. Special librarians are information resource experts who collect, analyze, evaluate, package and disseminate information to facilitate accurate decision-making in corporate, academic, and governmental settings. The Association offers a myriad of programs and services designed to help its members serve their customers more effectively and succeed in an increasingly challenging environment of information management and technology. SLA is committed to the professional growth and success of its membership.