

**Statement of  
Patricia Wand  
University Librarian  
American University**

**on behalf of the**

**American Library Association  
Association of Research Libraries  
American Association of Law Libraries  
Special Libraries Association**

**before the**

**Subcommittee on Legislative  
House Committee on Appropriations**

**on the FY 2001 Appropriations for the Library of Congress**

February 2, 2000

I am Patricia Wand, University Librarian, American University and I am appearing today on behalf of the American Library Association (ALA), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), and the Special Libraries Association (SLA). Collectively, these 4 associations represent thousands of individuals and institutions serving communities throughout the Nation. I very much appreciate the opportunity to appear again before the Subcommittee on Legislative. This Subcommittee has a long history of support for the Library of Congress and its programs.

Mr. Chairman, by 2007, it is estimated that there will be more than a billion computers and Internet-enabled appliances. These appliances and computers will contain software that we cannot even begin to imagine at this point but some of it will emerge from several key networked-based initiatives that will profoundly influence the direction and capabilities of data sharing and access. These activities have and will change how libraries and their users access and use a myriad of information resources. Libraries have actively promoted and invested in many networked-based programs and services with an appreciation for ensuring that these technologies and services benefit all sectors and importantly, so that these information resources are available for future generations.

The Library is poised to continue meeting the challenges of the print-based and digital networked information environments. LC 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, collectively serve constituencies throughout the Nation. As the Library approaches its bicentennial, these and other programs merit the continued and full support of the Subcommittee on Legislative and

its Members.

The Library of Congress request of \$428.1 million for FY 2001 (including the authority to obligate \$33.6 million in receipts) positions the Library to realize the benefits of the ever expanding digital networked environment while ensuring that ongoing programs and services are maintained. Although this request represents an 11.4% increase in the Library's budget, it is important to note that a significant share of this increase is slated for mandatory costs such as pay increases.

**I will focus my remarks on four LC program areas:**

- Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
- Preservation and Technology Initiatives
- Law Library
- 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 761,000 blind and physically handicapped persons throughout the United States and is accomplished via a cooperative network of 138 regional, sub-regional 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 22.5 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 of \$48,983,000 for this program in FY 2001 which includes \$367,389 in mandatory salary costs and \$813,950 in price level increases.

**Preservation and Technology Initiatives**

***Preservation:***

Mr. Chairman, the Nation faces a dual challenge in preserving our cultural and historical heritage - how to address the fragility of our printed past and the volatility of the electronic future. Our Nation relies upon the availability of our historical and cultural records that chronicle political events, document significant scientific breakthroughs, record cultural milestones, and more. To preserve the past, libraries have established many collaborative and cooperative programs to treat millions of books and other materials, most of which are becoming unreadable due to the acidic paper on which they are printed. This is truly a national crisis and our response must be sustained over many years, utilizing many different approaches to preserving these invaluable printed resources.

Some sense of how the library community has responded is illustrative. Over the past 20 years, more than 80 of the 121 ARL member libraries have established preservation programs with preservation activities becoming an institutional priority by the 1990's. By 1997 for example, more than \$80 million was slated for preservation activities in ARL libraries with over one million volumes treated.

The Library of Congress Mass Deacidification Program has, over several years, successfully deacidified over 250,000 books. This process, one of many employed by the library community to tackle this enormous and critical problem, extends the life of brittle books significantly, permitting their use for at least another 300-800 years. The FY 2001 request by the Library of Congress would make permanent the Mass Deacidification Program with the goal of saving 1,000,000 endangered books over five years. This proposal is part of a thirty-year plan to deacidify all older books as well as new, acidic acquisitions. In addition to substantially increasing the number of books deacidified each year, the program would also treat at least 5 million sheets of manuscripts.

***Technology:***

Recent statistics note that the number of college students enrolled in distance learning courses will reach 2.2 million in 2002, up from 710,000 in 1998. This phenomena is not limited to college students. Indeed, distance learning activities span all ages, K-99. Making more information resources available via the World Wide Web is integral to the success of distance learning endeavors. The Internet and World Wide Web are increasingly, a key means by which we learn, we teach, we communicate, and participate in our democracy. The investments and "lessons learned" from the National Digital Library position the Library to serve the Nation through the proposed National On-line Library. Thus we support the request to make the Library's digital library initiative, the National Digital Library, permanently authorized. The Library has contributed significantly to making our cultural and related resources accessible via the network. Libraries of all types are making substantial investments in making special collections and other resources accessible via the network in support of distance learning, making their collections more accessible to the public, and more. Together, with others in the public and private sectors, libraries provide a unique perspective and expertise regarding how to make these resources accessible in a meaningful and useful manner.

### **Law Library**

With over 2.3 million volumes, the Law Library of Congress is the world's largest legal collection of United States federal and state, international, comparative and foreign law covering over 200 jurisdictions. The Law Library provides legal and legislative reference and collection services to Congress, the Judicial and Executive branches of government, and to the American public. As our de facto national Law Library, it serves a critically important role as the Federal government's only comprehensive legal and legislative research collection. With an exceptionally skilled staff competent in most foreign languages and international law and legal systems of the world, the Law Library serves more than 100,000 users each year and, in addition, a rapidly increasing number of remote users through its web site and its unique digital collections.

We urge your full support for the Law Library's FY 2001 budget request of \$8.28 million. It includes a critically important increase to fund 16 FTE positions (including reference and research librarians, automation staff and technicians) to restore continued acceptable levels of research and reference service to members of Congress and other Government agencies and officials. In addition, the request includes necessary increases to support the Law Library's important automation projects: expanding the scope of the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN), a unique multinational legal database of official, current foreign law resources, and implementing the Library's Integrated Library System to all facets of its operations.

### **Security Measures**

Mr. Chairman, we thank the Congress for its support of the Library's efforts to enhance the security of the collections and its staff. All libraries face significant challenges in ensuring the safety of their staff and collections. Such services are integral to library operations. We support the Library of Congress request to make permanent police positions authorized in FY 1999 supplemental appropriations and for \$4.5 million for collections security controls. These requests complement, indeed, build upon other security measures supported by the Subcommittee over the last several years.

### **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 have a unique opportunity to ensure that all constituencies benefit from the Library's acquisitions pertaining to our Nation's cultural resources, growing networked information environment, and global information resources. 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, and SLA look forward to

working with you. We very much appreciate your continuing support for the Library and its programs.

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**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 4,800 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 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 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.