

Joint Letter to the Subcommittee on Appropriations in Support of the LC FY 2002 Budget Request

June 11, 2001

The Honorable Charles Taylor
Chairman
Subcommittee on Legislative Committee on Appropriations
H-147 Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515-6025

Dear Chairman Taylor,

On behalf of the American Library Association (ALA), the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), and the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), we write in support of the FY2002 budget request of the Library of Congress. Collectively, these 3 associations represent thousands of individuals and institutions serving communities throughout the Nation. ALA is a nonprofit educational organization of 61,000 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. AALL is a nonprofit educational organization with 5,000 members dedicated to providing leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy. ARL is an Association of 123 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.

Digital resources are growing at a phenomenal pace. As in the print environment, libraries in the networked environment 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. Thus it is important to strengthen those institutions which will be key players in this rapidly changing information-based economy. The Library of Congress budget request of \$442.7 million with \$34.7 million in authority to use receipts will enhance the Library's ability to effectively maintain ongoing operational activities while tackling key issues posed by the digital environment. Four programs merit special consideration and the support of the Subcommittee on Legislative. These include those focused on preservation activities, the Law Library of Congress, digital initiatives, and the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Preservation.

We face a significant preservation challenge - how to address the fragility of our printed past and the volatility of the electronic future. To preserve the past, libraries have established many collaborative 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.

The Library of Congress Mass Deacidification Program has, over several years, successfully

deacidified thousands of 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 2002 request by the Library of Congress represents a planned increase for the Program. This proposal is part of a thirty-year plan to deacidify all older books as well as new, acidic acquisitions. In addition, the Library has requested \$250,000 to support the new National Recording Registry and the national sound recording preservation program.

Finally, the special appropriation of \$99.8 million as a part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2001 to the Library of Congress is designed to address long-term preservation and access strategies for digital resources. To be successful, this important initiative will depend on extensive collaboration between the Library, research libraries and other institutions.

Law Library.

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. With an exceptionally skilled staff competent in most foreign languages and international law and legal systems of the world, the Law Library serves thousands of 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 2002 budget request which includes a program increase of \$1,030,388. These additional funds would be targeted to expand contract support for important collections maintenance functions and to continue the Law Library's successful digitization efforts.

Digital Initiatives.

The Library is requesting \$14,582,963 and new personnel to address a host of digital resource issues. Distinct from the FY 2001 funding to tackle long-term preservation strategies of "born" digital materials on a national basis, these funds would support the Library's digitally-based programs. These would include for example, developing a digital-repository architecture for the Library's holdings, technological infrastructure to support the Library's digital activities, and enhanced access services. All libraries are investing in comparable initiatives to fully realize the benefits of the networked environment and this request merits the Subcommittee's support.

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 blind and physically handicapped persons throughout the United States. Over 22 million audio and braille books are borrowed annually. The network of libraries also serves as distribution points for specialized playback equipment and accessories. The request of \$1,262,940 for mandatory pay and price level increases would provide needed additional support for this important service and also allow for the evaluation of alternative digital delivery mechanisms.

In conclusion, it is important to ensure that the public benefits from our Nation's cultural resources as well as from the global resources that the Library acquires. Funding to assist the Library in strengthening its infrastructure as well as targeted new initiatives focused on long-term preservation and access are key elements in meeting this goal. Lastly, as noted by Dr. Billington, the Copyright Office is charged with conducting a rulemaking every three years regarding the possible impact of technological protection measures on the education and research communities. We strongly agree with Dr. Billington's assessment that the three year cycle of the rulemaking should be shortened given the significant implications for the scholarly, library and education communities. We look forward to working with members of the Subcommittee on Legislation and very much appreciate your continuing support for the Library and its programs.

Sincerely,

Prudence S. Adler

[Association of Research Libraries](#)

Mary Alice Baish

[American Association of Law Libraries](#)

Lynne Bradley

[American Library Association](#)