



ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES

September 11, 2007

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Committee on Rules and Administration
SR-305 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bob Bennett
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Rules and Administration
SR-305 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Senator Bennett:

This letter is submitted for the hearing record on behalf of the Association of Research Libraries for the hearing on the nomination of Robert C. Tapella as Public Printer of the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). ARL thanks the Joint Committee on Printing for conducting this hearing which provides another opportunity to explore the important role of GPO and the programs it supports such as the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

There are a number of critically important qualifications that the leadership of GPO must possess in order to continue to successfully implement the strategic vision set forth in 2004, "*A Strategic Vision for the 21st Century*." This vision provides a roadmap that positions the agency to successfully serve Congress, the other branches of Government and the public in the digital, networked environment. To date, GPO and its leadership have been focused on identifying, procuring and implementing the needed building blocks, including hardware, software and most importantly expertise, to realize this strategic vision. This must continue under the new Public Printer.

Three key qualifications for this position are strong managerial skills, communications expertise, and a strong familiarity with and understanding of technology and technological trends. These qualifications are essential to any candidate given the size and complexity of GPO, the diversity of the constituencies it serves, and the central role of technology in its ability to serve its users.

21 Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036
202 296 2296 telephone
202 872 0884 fax
<http://www.arl.org/>

GPO is a large and complex organization thus requires a leader with strong managerial skills. Importantly, this will entail identifying and recruiting talented individuals with needed expertise to guide the agency in new directions to ensure a successful future for GPO.

Communications expertise is an essential component of leadership. The Public Printer must work effectively with Congress, other branches of government, and members of the public and the private sectors to ensure that GPO's many mission requirements are achieved effectively. As a consequence, GPO leadership must engage in extensive collaboration and forge new partnerships. Recently, GPO has worked collaboratively with ARL and others in the library community which is greatly appreciated and it is hoped that this will continue in the future. This has included exploring new models for the FDLP to effectively serve the public in the digital age.

GPO, like all other organizations, is undergoing significant change due to the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web. These disruptive technologies have forced agencies, organizations, institutions, businesses and individuals to change their practices and business models to best realize their missions or interests as these technologies present enormous opportunities. Congress has recognized the advantages to GPO and to government agencies to aggressively pursue the adoption of digital, networked technologies to better achieve their missions and serve their constituencies. GPO is responding to this change in agency dissemination practices, many of which are mandated through the E-Government Act. GPO is investing in new strategic initiatives that define its and the FDLP's future. For example, GPO is supporting the development of authentication services, preservation planning and implementation, improvements to GPO Access that support enhanced discovery, web harvesting, and reallocation of resources to manage the electronic collection.

The library community and GPO share a common mission – to support access to and preservation of government information. The FDLP is a long-standing partnership between the Federal Government, the library community and the public. The FDLP provides the American public with access to a wide array of Federal information.

Since the early 1990's, the library community has actively advocated for the inclusion of electronic government information in the FDLP. Congress, with guidance from this Committee, supported the shift to an electronic FDLP. This direction recognized the enhanced capabilities that electronic services provide to users of government information. The shift to a predominantly electronic FDLP signaled a change in the nature of the Program. The FDLP is moving from a collection-based program to a service-based program and from print-based to electronic. The focus of the Program is on expertise and access to the information resources, not on the physical collection. In addition, the future of the FDLP will be in building shared collections where resources are managed and interoperated. These may also include print collections that are digitized as our users prefer digital resources.

In closing, if confirmed, there are many challenges Mr. Tapella will face including the need to ensure the continuing investment in systems and services that provide the public with effective access to government information. He has a history with these issues and an understanding of the agency and its needs. ARL looks forward to working with him and his staff on these issues to ensure that government information is accessible and available to the public both now and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Prudence S. Adler".

Associate Executive Director,
Federal Relations and Information Policy