

# ALA American Library Association

July 21, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Dicks:

On behalf of the more than 63,000 members of the American Library Association (ALA), we write to express our concern for the proposed cuts to the Government Printing Office (GPO) in the recently released Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. As you know, the bill lowers the budget for the Office of Superintendent of Documents' Salaries and Expenses to \$35 million and eliminates appropriations for the Federal Digital System (FDsys).

The library community is deeply concerned about the impact these cuts would have on the American's public's ability to access government information.

The Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), funded by the Superintendent of Documents' Salaries and Expenses budget, is responsible for the dissemination of congressional and other government publications to participating academic, research, public, federal, state and other libraries nationwide as well as thousands of others via the Internet.

The FDLP is a long standing and extremely successful partnership among Congress, non-profit libraries, government agencies and the public. In return for the government providing libraries with government publications and needed discovery tools, participating federal depository libraries (FDLs) provide technological tools, expertise and related information resources to ensure that the public has access to needed government information at no cost to the user. The FDLP is currently made up of about 1,220 regional and selective depository libraries ensuring that the public of each state has multiple locations to access government information.

GPO's FDsys is a digital content system that permits GPO to capture, provide access to and preserve government information from all three branches of government. Information resources from federal departments and agencies, along with the courts, are available via GPO's technology platform and FDsys will evolve over time by incorporating new technologies that reflect changing user information needs. The lack of appropriated funds to FDsys means that this vehicle for public access is at great risk. Without the proper funding FDsys will not be able to provide the level of access that it was created for. While it may remain available to the public in its current state, no new information will be added; severely limiting access to government information. Another concern is the long term preservation of born digital material. If this material is not included in FDsys, the public could lose access to this material permanently.

Additionally, the bill directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study to review the feasibility of Executive Branch printing being performed by the General Services

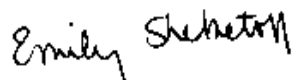
Administration, the transfer of the Superintendent of Documents program to the Library of Congress, and the privatization of the GPO. We ask that the library community be involved in this study, as a report that speaks to the future of the GPO and the Superintendent of Documents program is of vital interest to the library community and to public access to government documents.

We believe that the report would be most effective if all involved had the opportunity to participate and provide feedback.

No-fee public access to government information is the foundation of an informed citizenry; these cuts in appropriations will affect the public's right to government information. While we understand the need to make difficult decisions regarding the budget, we feel that hampering permanent public access of government information to the public is too high a price to pay.

Please find attached ALA resolution passed in June regarding the full funding for the Government Printing Office.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Emily Sheketoff in black ink.

Emily Sheketoff, Executive Director  
ALA Washington Office

CC. House Committee on Appropriations members

2010-2011 ALA CD #20.8  
2011 ALA Annual Meeting

**RESOLUTION ON GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE FY 2012 APPROPRIATIONS**

Whereas, No-fee public access to government information is the foundation of an informed citizenry; and

Whereas, The Government Printing Office (GPO) supports this foundation by providing no-fee permanent public access to government information in a variety of formats, including distribution and dissemination of Congressional and other government information through the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP); and

Whereas, The GPO's Federal Digital System (FDsys) enables GPO to capture, provide no-fee online access to and preserve official government information from all three branches of government; and

Whereas, The GPO's appropriations for Salaries and Expenses includes funding to ensure that government information will continue to be dispersed through the FDLP; and

Whereas, The GPO's appropriations for Salaries and Expenses will support the continuation of FDsys to ensure that valuable government information created today will be electronically discoverable, accessible, and preserved for future generations; and

Whereas, The GPO's appropriations for its Revolving Fund support information technology infrastructure and continuing systems development for FDsys and is necessary for the development and implementation of vital enhancements to FDsys including critical functionality for processing new collections; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the American Library Association (ALA) urges Congress to reaffirm the United States Government Printing Office's (GPO) mission in providing no-fee permanent public access to government information by fully funding the GPO appropriations for FY 2012 at the level requested by the United States Public Printer.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association



Keith Michael Fiels  
ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council  
Tuesday, June 28, 2011  
In New Orleans, Louisiana