

Statement of Dr. James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress
Before the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Fiscal 2011 Budget Request
April 21, 2010

Madam Chair, Mr. Aderholt, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to present the Library of Congress fiscal 2011 budget request.

Madam Chair, I am grateful to you and the subcommittee for your outstanding support for our fiscal 2010 request, which included a major investment in an initiative to renew and restore the Library's technological infrastructure. Through the 2009-2010 Management Agenda process, which I initiated last July, we are enhancing the governance and internal oversight of information technology investments to assure the most effective use of, and maximum accountability for, these funds.

In recognition of the difficult budget environment, we are requesting a total fiscal 2011 budget of \$715.5 million, a lean increase of \$31.4 million or 4.6% over fiscal 2010. Fifty-eight percent of this request is for mandatory pay and price level increases. The largest program element in the modest requested increase for critical operations is the \$4.9 million needed to address urgent Congressional needs in the Congressional Research Service budget. Our requested increase of 30 FTEs is necessitated by the greatly increased workload of the Library during the period from 1992 to 2010, in which an entire digital library has been added to the traditional library while the level of FTEs has fallen by 1,078 FTEs to 3,770.

The details of the Library's budget request are described in this statement. At the start, I want to address a subject of paramount importance: the Library's collections. Our most critical need and highest priority this year is Ft. Meade Module 5—for which funding is requested in the AOC's fiscal 2011 budget.

The increased importance of this unique repository of human knowledge is solidly based on its history. Over two centuries, the Congress has built its Library into the largest and most diverse collection of human knowledge ever assembled by one institution. The Library also preserves the closest thing to a mint record of America's creativity thanks largely to its exclusive status as the depository of copyrighted works. It annually collects significant world cultural and scholarly resources in more languages and formats than any library in the world. Sustaining Congress's support for the mission of this unique American cultural institution is more important than ever before in this

“information age,” when our economy and leadership depend more and more on usable knowledge.

When the original library, housed in the Capitol, was burned by British troops in 1814, Thomas Jefferson within a month offered his personal library as a replacement. The Jeffersonian concept of universality argued that all subjects are important to the library of the American legislature, and this has guided the comprehensive collecting policies of the Library.

The Library of Congress is the only institution in the world capable of sustaining collections on this scale. We cannot foresee all that will be important to those who come after us. But we have innumerable examples of how past items we saved have proven useful later in unforeseen ways. We are inspired as well as informed by preserving the thoughts, anxieties, achievements, and aspirations of past generations. If we collect less and the Library’s collections diminish, future generations *will* know that we deprived them of that open window into their past.

I have been asked, “When is this going to stop?” If we want the Library of Congress to exist for future generations as it does for us today and has for generations past, it cannot, should not stop. Our request for Ft. Meade Storage Module 5 is not about another building. It is about preserving our collections and protecting the very essence of the Library of Congress.

I can assure you that the Library of Congress does not keep everything. We have carefully thought-out acquisitions policies, developed and updated regularly by our curators and other experts. We continually work to improve our collections management, including inventory management, and with the Congress’s great support, we now have storage modules at Ft. Meade to secure and preserve our most valuable items. We will continue to do everything we can to be more efficient; but we will continue to need more space to store the Library’s growing collections, and we are heartened by having a 100 percent retrieval rate from the Ft. Meade repositories to our reading rooms.

I have also been asked why we need to sustain collections when so much content is available electronically. It is a myth that as digital content has exploded onto the scene, hard copy materials are significantly declining. In fact, in the past ten years alone, global book publishing has increased by 40 percent, and published books are increasing in number everywhere except (and for the first time this year) in the USA. The Library has enormous digital content holdings, but digital information will never replace our heritage assets, the physical record of knowledge and creativity represented in the collections. And there is a need to keep hard copies of many materials in view of the risks of tampering and the impermanence of much digital material.

The Library of Congress was established out of our forefathers’ conviction that knowledge is important to governance. Jefferson in essence established our collections policy. I believe that he would understand why we must continue to build the collections even though we face challenges in being able to store them, preserve them, and make

them accessible. For the past 210 years, the Congress has made it a priority, through good times and bad, to allocate resources to properly fund the Library of Congress – to meet its acquisition and related storage needs. As a result, people living today have access to an incredible record of knowledge and creativity.

If we succeed in our mission, our descendants—25, 50, and 200 years from now—will be able to benefit from what we found important to acquire and preserve in 2011.

Facing both relentless technological change and ever-increasing demands on the federal budget, the Library has to be both disciplined and creative to fulfill its historic mission of service to the Congress and to the American people.

This budget request is informed by an ambitious 2009-2010 Management Agenda that I launched in July 2009 to ensure that the Library's investment priorities are focused even as its programs reflect new ideas and solutions. We have instituted a Library-wide approach to updating the Library's strategic plan and aggressively developed coordinated plans for information resource management, enterprise architecture, human capital management, facilities management, website content, the acquisition of electronic works through mandatory deposit, and the creation of a culture of innovation at the Library.

The Management Agenda also addresses findings from a number of recent internal management-related studies, including a report from an internal Library Committee on Strategic Direction, an Inspector General report on information technology strategic planning, and a Library-wide employee survey. The agenda will help the Library's Executive Committee continue to strengthen Library decision making, allocation of resources, and accountability.

Since its July launch, the Management Agenda has emphasized the development of results-oriented outcomes, broad involvement from all levels of Library staff and managers, and implementation of best practices in Library management structures and processes.

For the Library's fiscal 2011 request, our principal requests for program increases are for:

**Broadening Research Capacity
and Enhancing Data Management Technology
to Better Serve Congress on Complex Emerging Policy Issues**

Broaden Research Capacity - \$2.8 million

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) requests funding and FTEs in fiscal 2011 to broaden its expertise and strengthen analytical capacity in the areas of science and technology, health care, financial economics and accounting, and social policy

related to employment, immigration, and the work force. This funding will enable CRS to enhance its unique multidisciplinary analysis on the range of complex policy issues before the Congress. The request is the first half of a two-year initiative to provide the additional analytical skills needed to fully support the expanding needs of the Congress in these areas. This additional analytical capacity will also give CRS the long-term flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing issues and debates that will arise in these critical areas.

Enhance Technology - \$2.1 million

CRS also requests funding to adapt and strengthen its information technology research architecture in order to meet growing congressional demands in almost every policy area for analysis requiring an increasing quantity of complex data. This funding will enable CRS to create and maintain a state-of-the-art information research architecture, establish a robust research data management (RDM) structure, and develop new mechanisms to deliver CRS products and services to its congressional clients.

Assuring Access to the Collections Now and into the Future

The Library's fiscal 2011 budget request includes modest support for key operational and technological improvements that directly affect the delivery of core mission services. The request will support our newly reorganized strategic planning efforts over the last several years to prioritize our needs and allocation of resources.

Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate Space Reconfiguration – \$1.05 million

The request includes support for a reconfiguration of space in the Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate (ABA) to realize efficiencies in acquiring and processing collections materials. This is a critical core function of the Library. Heretofore these processes have been based on a century-old library model. Work processes have been reengineered and streamlined, and now a space reconfiguration is needed to fully implement our new workflow model by creating appropriate processing areas, mail receiving areas, shelving, and secure housing areas.

Collections Inventory Management - \$1 million

The requested increase in funding will also help to make inventory control an ongoing, core function. This funding will support the continuation of the baseline inventory initiative begun in 2002, as well as the inventory work related to the transfer of collections to Ft. Meade. The Library is working with leaders in the private sector to identify and incorporate best practices in inventory control.

Integrated Workflow and System Replacement - \$1.35 million

The Library also requests funding to take full advantage of technology by completing the analysis of Library Services' systems and workflows begun in fiscal 2009. This effort is developing a process management system to integrate current systems and databases, thereby streamlining Library-wide business functions. The Library's renewed enterprise architecture program will guide the development of the system. This request also includes support for the replacement of an inadequate MS DOS-based order, distribution, and accounting software system used by the Library's overseas offices.

Elimination of Foreign Legal Gazette Backlog and Class K Conversion - \$1.1 million

Finally, to ensure that the law collection is both comprehensive and current, the Library requests funding for contractual services to eliminate a preservation backlog of foreign legal gazettes, as well as personnel resources to reclassify 610,000 volumes in the law collections. This reclassification will allow new legal specialists to search and retrieve all portions of the collections, as staff members most familiar with the older classification system retire.

Investing in Human Capital

Supervisor Development - \$1.05 million

In alignment with the Management Agenda's focus on human capital management, the Library requests an investment in developing supervisors and staff, as well as funding for a Library-wide student loan program to support recruitment and retention of the next generation of Library employees. The request for funding for supervisory development flows in part from a Library-wide employee survey, which revealed the need for enhanced supervisory and leadership skills to develop new and existing supervisors with the skills to hire and cultivate a diverse and effective workforce.

Staff Development - \$1.6 million

The Library requests funding to invest in staff development to address critical training gaps, and to develop and sustain a culture of innovation. Funding for the Library-wide student loan program modeled on the programs of the Congress and the Executive Branch will give the Library the retention and recruitment tool that it needs.

Ensuring Effective and Efficient Maintenance and Operation of the Library's Public Spaces and Facilities

Public Space Maintenance and Operations – \$1.5 million

The Library's request includes funding to support Library-wide and public space facility needs. The expanding workload associated with the greatly increased number of

visitors, aging historic buildings, complex regulatory requirements, and broad new energy conservation initiatives cannot be accomplished with currently available resources. In fiscal 2011, the Library requests support to address flooring issues in public spaces, including carpeting that has long ago exceeded its normal replacement cycle; to implement greening and energy conservation initiatives; to eliminate an Office of Compliance-reported workstation safety hazard; to modernize food service areas; and to expand the use of contract professional design and engineering services as recommended by the Office of the Inspector General.

Furniture Inventory Management - \$391 thousand

In addition, the request includes funding to implement an ongoing contract for an automated furniture inventory and recycling system for furniture reuse. This funding will support the Library's highly successful furniture inventory and reuse pilot project, which since 2006 has effectively reused 13,196 pieces of furniture to achieve a three-year savings/cost avoidance roughly ten times the annual cost of a furniture inventory management contract. This requested funding will also support a small stock of high demand, frequently needed items for rapid provision to offices that are experiencing losses of productivity because of the long lead time required for procurement processing.

**Acquiring In-House IT Capability in the Electronic Copyright Office (eCO)
and Licensing/Royalty Distribution Systems**

Copyright Technology Office IT Support - \$475 thousand

In response to an increase in responsibilities related to system infrastructure and development support for the electronic Copyright Office (eCO) system on which the great majority of Copyright Office activities are processed, the Copyright Office requests funding to acquire in-house IT expertise for the system. This funding will provide highly skilled and experienced IT professionals to support the eCO system so that the Copyright Office will rely less on contract support for day-to-day maintenance and operations. This funding will also result in more detailed and efficient system implementation and testing.

Licensing Reengineering Project - \$790 thousand

The Copyright Office also requests funding for contractor support to complete the implementation of the Licensing Division reengineering effort to automate the royalty calculations process. Reengineering Licensing's processes and automating the calculations process will improve productivity and strengthen responsiveness to both copyright claimants and users of the public licenses. In addition, the Copyright Office requests funding for IT staffing to support the reengineered licensing/royalty distribution system.

The committee last year appropriately expressed concern about the number of copyright registration applications waiting processing. Through internal efforts in the

Copyright Office and a recent program which I initiated to temporarily assign 50 other Library personnel to the Office, we have made a significant reduction – close to 70,000 claims – in that backlog. Both the Register and I will continue to give this effort a high priority.

In summary, senior management's extensive recent efforts to renew and improve governance processes and accountability across the Library account for our fiscal 2011 funding request to support these critical operational requirements and immediate congressional needs.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, thank you again for your support and your consideration of our fiscal 2011 budget.