

Library of Congress, GPO appropriations hearings held

ALA and other library advocates have been closely monitoring the congressional budget process. Rep. Charles Taylor (R-North Carolina), chair of the Legislation Subcommittee of House Appropriations, conducted hearings on January 27 for the House Administration budget and the Library of Congress (LC), and on February 1 for the Government Printing Office (GPO) budget. Taylor declared there was a "tighter budget than we'd hoped" at the outset of these hearings.

On February 2, two ACRL members testified in support of LC and GPO budgets. Patricia Wand, university librarian at American University in Washington, D.C., testified in support of the LC budget while Ridley Kessler, documents librarian at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, testified in support of GPO's budget request.

Librarian of Congress James Billington and Deputy Librarian of Congress Donald Scott presented the FY2001 budget request at \$428.1 million with \$33.6 million requested in authority to use receipts. Billington stated that part of the requested net increase was needed to fund mandatory pay increases and an increase of employees. He thanked the subcommittee and Congress for passing the legislation required to celebrate LC's bicentennial year and for being the "greatest single library patron."

He expanded on the American Memory digitized project and the Digital Futures Plan, a plan to bridge the gap between the information haves and have nots. Scott spoke of LC's security plan and the four levels of inventory it is implementing.

On February 1, the subcommittee considered the FY2001 budget request of the GPO. Public Printer Michael DiMario and Superintendent of Documents Francis Buckley presented GPO's budget request of \$121.3 million for printing and binding, \$34.5 million

for the Superintendent of Documents' account, and a request of \$6 million for the revolving fund. The \$6 million would cover extraordinary expenses associated with the replacement of GPO's air-conditioning system.

DiMario said the projected workload included the reprinting of the U.S. Code, which is done every six years. Printing and binding costs projections were based on historical costs for Presidential election years. DiMario agreed that some electronic changes had reduced costs now that nearly 50 percent of all products are electronic. He said use of GPO Access database services (http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/index.html) has increased considerably, and investment is needed to keep it up-to-date and operating effectively.

Buckley said that while more than 60 percent of new titles are electronic, there is still need for paper copies—such as the recognized official version of the U.S. Code and the Congressional Record. Law librarians, lawyers, and others need the paper copied for the recognized legal citations.

Responding to a question from Taylor about additional employees, Buckley said that four are needed for cataloging and indexing, and three for GPO Access, telephone support, and library inspectors for the depositary library system.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland) asked about the recent computer hacking of the Thomas system (<http://thomas.loc.gov>). DiMario explained that a brand new firewall had been installed. They are constantly looking at the issue of security and will be hiring another network security specialist. Hoyer also complimented GPO on receiving a professional award as the best printing agency, and said that Chairman Henry Hyde (R-Illinois) had been effusive in complimenting GPO on production of the Starr Report as well as the Microsoft opinion.

Watch for further updates on the FY2001 appropriations in this column and in ALAWON, the ALA Washington Office Electronic Newswire. ■