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**Prepared Statement before the
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives**

**United States Government Publishing Office
FY 2023 Budget Hearing**

April 27, 2022
11:00 A.M.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Herrera Beutler, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am honored to appear before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations to present the Government Publishing Office's (GPO's) fiscal year 2023 appropriations request. I thank you and your staff for your past support of GPO—particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic—and I look forward to continuing our close partnership during my time as Director. For the coming fiscal year, I am requesting appropriations in the amount of \$130,904,000, an increase of \$6,667,000 over our FY 2022 appropriation.

This marks just the second time in a decade that GPO has requested an increase in appropriated funds and our FY 2023 request incorporates increased costs in labor and materials, while accommodating certain initiatives of importance to Congress and the rest of the Legislative Branch. Despite the proposed increase, our FY 2023 request is still 11 percent lower than the Agency's all-time high appropriation of \$147.5 million in FY 2010.

In general, appropriated funds represent a comparatively small portion of GPO's overall revenue and operating capital. Nearly 88 percent of GPO's FY 2021 revenue came from billings of its other Federal customers, including the State Department, the courts, the Department of Defense, and many others. And just as we occasionally need to adjust the rates we charge our other customers, we also need to request adjustments to our appropriation levels to ensure that we are meeting our statutory obligation to recover our costs and provide for investments that will yield additional efficiency and capability.

Recovering from COVID-19 in 2021

When we met last spring, GPO was just celebrating its 160th anniversary and coming off one of the most trying years in the Agency's history.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and necessary mitigation measures associated with it, pummeled our FY 2020 finances and exerted intense pressures on GPO's personnel.

One good example was the measures we put in place to preserve capacity among our proofroom staff, who play an essential role in the production of congressional bills, the Congressional Record, and the Federal Register. To guard against the possibility of a catastrophic COVID-19 outbreak that could shut the entire proofroom down—and jeopardize the production of congressional publications critical to the operation of Congress in the process—we divided our proofroom workforce into alternating teams, where only one team would report for duty each week.

This policy successfully preserved our capacity to meet the most critical demands of Congress and the Federal Register, but reduced overall productivity. When their team was on duty they would find themselves understaffed, overstressed, and playing perpetual catch up and when their team was off duty they remained on call so they were limited in how they use that time.

While everyone performed admirably throughout, it was an enormous relief when broad-based vaccine availability finally permitted us to end this policy early last summer and bring everyone back to work.

On the financial front, today I am happy that after a year of steady, incremental progress, GPO has rebounded financially. In fact, in FY 2021 GPO posted an adjusted net operating income of \$55.6 million versus the net operating loss of \$21.5 million we endured in fiscal year 2020. This income represents a healthy year on top of recouping our losses from the pandemic.

You may recall from my testimony last year that there were two driving forces behind the FY 2020 losses—a marked COVID-19-related reduction in agency orders for GPO services and increased operating costs, including \$7 million in emergency pay costs required simply to operate during the pandemic’s darkest days. As order volume began to recover throughout FY 2021 and our expenses steadied as the Agency focused on normal post-COVID operations, GPO found itself in a good position looking into the future.

Among the most significant lessons of the pandemic was the importance of telework and remote work to maintaining our capabilities and unlocking the productivity of that portion of our workforce. Roughly one-third of our 1,547 teammates could perform their duties remotely and we saw results that indicate that our team can be just as productive working at home, if not more so.

We quickly realized that a robust telework and remote work program would continue to yield benefits long after COVID fades into the background. Today approximately 66 percent of GPO employees work full-time in person, 19 percent work a hybrid schedule, and 15 percent are full-time telework. I expect these figures to hold as GPO settles into its new operating posture in early May.

Additionally, wide adoption of telework and remote work helps us recruit new teammates in ways we could have never imagined. GPO’s workforce is one of the oldest in the Federal government so attracting the next generation of GPO leaders is a critical task. The availability of remote work enables us to recruit and hire the best talent regardless of where they reside in the United States. Similarly, telework contributes to GPO’s reputation as a desirable employer, something recognized by Forbes Magazine which recently named GPO one of the Best Midsize Employers in America. In a fiercely competitive hiring market, we are grateful for that recognition.

GPO adopted a similar vaccine requirement as the executive branch so as to avoid any issues with our Federal customers. We are proud of our 96 percent vaccination rate and the resilience of our team through the Omicron COVID flare.

A Snapshot of GPO's Business

GPO has three primary lines of business: (1) producing items requested by our customers, either ourselves or through contracts with other firms across the country; (2) making government information available through libraries, the internet, and direct distribution; and (3) building the tools that our customers use to produce their own content in formats that facilitate digital and physical distribution.

Production

GPO's business portfolio consists of—

- the passports and secure credentials we produce for the State Department and other Federal agencies;
- the print procurement and ancillary business services we provide to a broad range of Federal agencies; and
- our in-house production work for Congress and the Executive Branch.

For Congress, work we complete in-house includes the Congressional Record, the House and Senate calendars, bills, resolutions, and committee reports and hearings, and the United States Code. For the executive branch, we produce the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations, the President's Budget, the Economic Report of the President, and many other high-profile publications. Notably, daily production of the Congressional Record and the Federal Register is like producing two major city newspapers every day.

Additionally, our craftspeople frequently produce a wide array of programs, invitations, and ceremonial and commemorative documents for both the executive and legislative branches.

Making Government Information Available to the Public

Still another core enterprise of GPO is administering the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), through which GPO provides important public documents to the over 1,100 FDLP-affiliated libraries nationwide, many of which are then also made available to the general public at no charge through our ISO-certified secure digital repository, **govinfo.gov**. Through the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications (CGP), the public can identify and access over 1 million current and historic government titles and resources housed in FDLP libraries throughout the country or linked to in digital collections at libraries and Federal agencies.

GPO's Superintendent of Documents, Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) supports the FDLP libraries in the identification and access to new government content, maintenance of their tangible collections, digitization of aging and rare tangible documents, and education, outreach and training to ensure that the staff of FDLP libraries can assist their patrons in finding government information in both tangible and digital collections. Additionally, LSCM distributes new tangible publications to the FDLP libraries.

The Superintendent of Documents also supervises a sales and distribution program offering current, high-interest Federal publications to the public. They also provide logistics and warehousing services for Federal customers distributing printed materials.

Building the Tools to Deliver on the Vision of an America Informed

As technology evolved, GPO updated its operations to keep pace. With the development of GPO's proprietary MicroComp composition engine in the 1980s, GPO got into the business of building tools that would later be incorporated into our customers' workflows. Soon after adoption by GPO, Congress incorporated MicroComp into its own workflows in the House and Senate offices of Legislative Counsel as well as the legislative operations teams of the Clerk of the House and Secretary of the Senate. While MicroComp is still in use today, GPO is hard at work on its replacement, XPub, which will leverage a number of commercial and open-source technologies to produce a composition system worthy of the 21st century.

GPO also works closely with the Clerk of the House, the Secretary of the Senate, and the Bulk Data Task Force in development of United States Legislative Markup (USLM) schema, a key underlying technology for XPub.

GPO's ISO-certified secure digital repository, **govinfo**, is also a key technology for supporting our customers. The data in **govinfo** supports many public and private sector databases, such as Congress.gov, through open application programming interfaces (APIs). In FY 2021, there were 70 million average monthly information retrievals from **govinfo's** collection of more than 2.2 million content packages.

Breaking Down GPO's Revenue

In fiscal year 2021, GPO's overall revenues totaled \$961.9 million.

Of that amount, \$850 million—or 88 percent—came from direct billings to our non-congressional customers. This category includes current and next generation passports produced for the State Department, secure credentials produced for numerous Federal agencies, including the Capitol Police, and Federal print procurement contracts managed by GPO.

Another 7 percent—or \$64 million—came from billings to Congress for the provision of specific requested services, including the Congressional Record, congressional hearings, bills, resolutions, calendars, and other publications.

Still another 3 percent—or \$32 million—came from appropriations we used to administer the Federal Depository Library Program and provide critical public information program services.

And finally, the remaining 2 percent—or \$16 million—came from appropriations this Subcommittee provided to enable GPO to make critical information technology and cybersecurity investments for the future.

Some Key Accomplishments

Despite the challenges of the past year, GPO achieved some notable accomplishments:

We rolled out our 100 percent telework and remote work policies for eligible employees informed by the lessons we learned broadly deploying telework during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our **govinfo** digital repository passed its fourth consecutive intensive annual audit to retain its ISO 16363 Trustworthy Digital Repository status and is currently the only certified digital repository in the entire world.

We also celebrated the 9 billionth retrieval of Government information from GPO's websites since GPO began publishing Government information online in 1994, first through *GPOAccess*, then FDsys, and now **govinfo**.

Our Customer Services business unit issued over \$401 million in competitive contracts to private-sector printing companies from across the country, supporting thousands of jobs in all 50 states, while also overseeing the printing of millions of economic stimulus and child tax credit checks and the printing and mailing of hundreds of millions of notices providing needed information about Federal COVID relief programs.

Our Security & Intelligent Documents (SID) business unit produced 14.85 million passports for the State Department, and over 3.5 million secure-care credentials for our Federal agency customers.

We proudly assisted the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies by producing tickets, secure credentials, programs, and commemorative materials for the 59th Presidential Inauguration, and were honored to support congressional memorial services honoring the lives of United States Capitol Police officers Brian D. Sicknick and William F. Evans.

We reached an agreement with our partners at the National Archive and Records Administration (NARA) to build out the second phase of the Center for Legislative Archives (CLA) project, an initiative that when complete will provide NARA with congressional archives space for the next 50 years.

In August, we assisted State Department humanitarian efforts by quickly creating informational posters in both the Dari and Pashtun languages to greet arriving Afghan refugees at Philadelphia and Dulles international airports.

And—for the 25th consecutive year—GPO’s independent outside auditor provided GPO with an unmodified, or clean, opinion on our annual financial statements.

GPO’s FY 2023 Appropriations Request

GPO is requesting an increase in its FY 2023 appropriations to \$130,904,000, a \$6,667,000 increase over our FY 2022 appropriation. This increase will account for changes in our labor and raw materials costs and also fund certain ongoing projects of importance to our congressional customers.

This would be GPO’s only second proposed increase in appropriations since FY 2014 and is actually 11 percent less than our FY 2010 appropriation. Increased productivity through the adoption of new technologies has been key to keeping GPO’s needs for appropriations down, providing new and improved services at lower costs, and reducing overall headcounts. Currently, we have 1,547 GPO teammates, compared to 2,284 in FY 2010.

One tool we used to keep our appropriations requests low was to repurpose prior year unexpended balances. We appreciate the willingness of this Subcommittee and the Full Committee to allow GPO to use those balances in support of programs and capital investments that benefit the original purpose of the appropriated funds.

However, as I foreshadowed in my testimony in each of the past two years, those balances are dwindling, forcing us to request additional funds if we are to continue our current pace of development and innovation.

Our FY 2023 request includes \$82,992,000 for congressional publishing, a \$4,120,000 increase over our FY 2022 appropriation. It is based on our estimates of Congress’ likely needs, informed by historical trends, and available unexpended balances. It is also informed by increased raw materials and labor costs. In constant dollar terms it represents a 32 percent reduction for congressional publishing since FY 2010.

Our request for our public information programs (PIP) account, through which we administer the nationwide Federal Depository Library Program, is \$35,257,000. This represents an increase of \$1,237,000—or 3.6 percent—over FY 2022, and will cover the costs of providing Federal Government publications in digital and tangible formats to 1,113 Federal depository libraries nationwide, cataloging and indexing, and distributing documents to recipients designated by law and international exchanges. Rising labor and compensation costs as well as increased materials costs are the driving factors behind this increase in our FY 2023 PIP appropriation request. Even with this proposed increase, the PIP appropriation will remain nearly 14 percent lower than the amount appropriated in FY 2010, or 34 percent lower in constant dollar terms.

The final component of our overall appropriations request is for a total of \$12,655,000 for GPO's revolving fund to support capital investments and information technology upgrades, which represents a \$1,310,000 over amounts appropriated in FY 2022.

This component of our request is critically important to ensuring that GPO can make the capital investments in equipment and technology needed to continue providing Congress and our Federal agency customers with high level of service they expect.

Within this request for an increase in appropriations to our revolving fund, we have identified four specific capital investment projects that this funding would support. Three of these items will be familiar to the Subcommittee, as they represent long-standing GPO priorities; the last item is submitted at the request of the Agency's Inspector General (IG).

First, we are seeking direct appropriations support for our continued development of the XPub composition system. XPub has been under development for several years now and is intended to fully replace our more than 30-year-old proprietary MicroComp composition system.

XPub is a transformational project for GPO. It will enable GPO and its customers to move to an all XML-composition workflow, simplifying authoring and production while also providing data in a format where it can easily be posted on the web, delivered to mobile devices, repurposed into e-books, or used by smart people in the public and private sectors to create tools we haven't even thought of yet.

XPub is being deployed on a product-by-product basis. In 2019, GPO used XPub to publish the more than 60,000-page 2018 Main Edition of the United States Code, permitting GPO to publish it approximately seven months faster than the prior edition. In 2020, XPub was used to create the Final Report of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress and we have several other pilot projects ongoing with congressional committees.

Last year, as a prelude to the upcoming XPub production of congressional bills, public laws, and statutes at large, GPO released for public comment a proposed new responsive HTML format for congressional bills and public laws. This format is optimized for any device, including smart phones, tablets, and laptops, uses easy-to-read fonts, and contains metadata to enable easy reuse. This is a huge step forward from the existing text-based display which is difficult to reuse and adds little value to the legislative process. More information about this new display can be found at GPO's GitHub repository at <https://github.com/usgpo/xpub>.

Prior to FY 2022, much of the initial development of XPub had been funded through the annual reprogramming of unexpended appropriations with the Subcommittee's support, but given GPO's static appropriations requests, those funds have largely evaporated. In recognition of the importance of the XPub project, the Subcommittee generously provided a direct appropriation of \$3,370,000 in FY 2022.

If approved, our \$5,630,000 appropriation request will keep XPub development and deployment on track in FY 2023. Once development is complete, we hope to provide XPub to our customers as a software-as-a-service (SAAS) application, ensuring that there is a dedicated stream of income to support continued development of the platform without the need for separate recurring appropriations.

The second component of GPO's request for increased capital investment appropriations in FY 2023 relates to the continued development of our peerless **govinfo** online portal, the world's only ISO-certified trusted digital repository. In recent years, the Subcommittee directly appropriated funds to refresh **govinfo's** infrastructure and further develop its content collections. This year's request of \$5,875,000 for **govinfo** is \$950,000 less than the amount the Subcommittee provided in FY 2022, and it would be divided between infrastructure investments (\$2.375 million) and development investments (\$3.5 million), including development required to support the digitization of historical content.

Investments in **govinfo** support the distribution of much of the legislative data that supports the Library of Congress' Congress.gov site as well as the bulk data made available for other public uses. In addition, **govinfo** helps keep the costs of administering the Federal Depository Library Program down by making hundreds of thousands of critical Government publications available online free of charge, obviating the need to print and distribute thousands of volumes annually.

With the Subcommittee's sustained support, GPO has been able to add hundreds of thousands of additional documents and publications to the **govinfo** online repository each year—over 320,000 content packages were added in FY 2021—and the public's usage of **govinfo** continues to grow, with more than 837 million retrievals from **govinfo** in FY 2021 and more than 9 billion retrievals over the system's lifetime.

GPO successfully completed its fourth annual audit to retain **govinfo's** ISO certification. With this designation, end users can be comfortable knowing that information accessed via **govinfo** is both safely secured and authentic, two invaluable attributes for government information.

The third component of GPO's request for increased appropriations for its business operations revolving fund account is for \$150,000 to support GPO's broad and ongoing efforts to defend against advanced persistent attacks (APTs) to its information technology systems. In recent years, the Subcommittee has generously provided direct appropriations for these types of investments and this year GPO is again requesting support. As you know, cyberattacks on our critical infrastructure continue to mount from foreign and domestic sources.

GPO has several million dollars in ongoing APT investments currently underway to reduce the risk of unauthorized access, data exfiltration, and changes to data, and this request would help support those efforts.

Lastly, solely at the request of the Agency's IG, we have included \$1,000,000 to outsource the Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) information technology (IT) and Human Capital functions, including payroll. This request is part of the OIG's request for total budget authority of \$7.949 million in FY 2023 and was included as part of our FY 2023 Budget Submission, as required by section 1604(c) of the Legislative Branch Inspectors General Independence Act. As you know, the OIG's annual budget is currently funded as part of GPO's agency overhead—a component of the prices and rates GPO charges its agency customers and Congress—and not as a direct appropriation. This particular amount is being requested as a direct appropriation.

Chairman Ryan, Ranking Member Herrera Beutler, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present GPO's FY 2023 appropriations request, and for all the support you and your staff have extended to us during these challenging past two years.

This completes my prepared statement, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



Hugh Nathaniel Halpern, *GPO Director*

Hugh Nathaniel Halpern is the U.S. Government Publishing Office (GPO) Director, the agency's chief executive officer. The agency is responsible for publishing and printing information for the three branches of the Federal Government. Halpern is the 28th person to lead GPO since the agency opened its doors for business on March 4, 1861, the same day Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as the 16th President of the United States. President Donald Trump nominated Halpern to be GPO Director on October 17, 2019, and the U.S. Senate confirmed him on December 4, 2019.

Biography

Prior to coming to GPO, Halpern held a succession of leadership positions during his 30 years on Capitol Hill. He served as the Director of Floor Operations for the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. In that role, Halpern was the highest-ranking floor staffer in the House and served as Speaker Paul Ryan's Chief Advisor on all procedural matters. He managed the daily floor operations of the House, served as the liaison to all leadership offices, and oversaw legislative interactions between The White House, House and Senate. In 2018, he received the John W. McCormack Award of Excellence, the highest award given to a staff member in the House. The award recognizes a lifetime of bipartisan service to the House.

In addition to his position in the Speaker's Office, Halpern has more than a decade of experience serving on the senior leadership staff. He has a proven track record of successfully leading teams to achieve results.

During his career, he served half a dozen different committees in both policy development and procedural roles. During his 11 years on the House Committee on Rules, Halpern served as Staff Director leading the management and terms of debate on the House floor. In 2001, he was named General Counsel by Chairman Mike Oxley for the newly established House Committee on Financial Services. During his tenure, the committee provided legislation addressing terrorist financing and money laundering, improving investor confidence in the wake of the Enron and WorldCom scandals and granting consumers important new tools to fight identity theft. During the 1990s, Halpern served on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, where he handled a variety of legislative issues, including automobile safety, insurance, FTC consumer protection and tobacco regulation. Halpern began his career in Congress as an intern for Rep. E.G. "Bud" Shuster in 1987.

Halpern served a number of temporary positions during his time on Capitol Hill. He was the Parliamentarian to the First Select Committee on Homeland Security, which created the Department of Homeland Security, General Counsel to the Select Committee to investigate the voting irregularities of August 2, 2007, and Assistant Parliamentarian to the 2008, 2012, and 2016 Republican National Conventions.

A native of Hollidaysburg, PA, Halpern received bachelor's and master's degrees in Political Science from American University in 1991 and 1992, respectively. He also received a law degree from George Mason University in 1997. Halpern has been included in Roll Call's list of 50 most powerful Congressional staffers 14 times and featured in a National Journal profile as one of "The New Power Players" on Capitol Hill.