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**Prepared Statement Before the  
Committee on House Administration on  
GPO's Federal Depository Library Program**

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**10:15 am**

**1310 Longworth House Office Building**

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you as you consider the mission and operations of GPO's Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

I am Laurie Beyer Hall, Acting Superintendent of Documents. I have been with GPO and the FDLP since 1985, serving in a variety of positions with the FDLP staff and working on key strategic initiatives affecting the program. In my current position, I oversee the operations of GPO's Library Services and Content Management (LSCM) business unit with a staff of approximately 95 librarians and other information professionals. LSCM administers four statutorily-mandated information dissemination programs: the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), the Cataloging and Indexing Program, the International Exchange Service, and the By-Law Distribution Program. I am also responsible for supporting the implementation of strategic programs and operations in partnership with depository libraries and in collaboration with other GPO business units and Federal agencies.

As GPO Director Davita Vance-Cooks has testified before you, GPO's mission to produce and distribute the official publications of the Government fulfills an informing role originally envisioned by the Founding Fathers. As James Madison once said:

A popular Government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy, or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.

The FDLP is the primary operation at GPO carrying out that informing role. The program has legislative antecedents that date to 1813, when Congress first authorized congressional documents to be deposited at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA, for the use of the public. Since then, Federal depository libraries have served as the critical link between "We the People" and the information made available by the Federal Government. GPO

provides the libraries with information products in digital and, in some cases, tangible formats, and the libraries in turn make them available to the public at no charge while providing additional assistance to depository library users.

Supported by the Cataloging and Indexing Program, the FDLP today serves millions of Americans through a network of approximately 1,150 public, academic, law, and other libraries located across the Nation, averaging nearly three per congressional district. Once limited to the distribution of printed and microfiche products, the FDLP today is primarily digital, supported by GPO's Federal Digital System (FDsys) and its successor system, **govinfo**, along with other digital resources.

The main outlines of the FDLP were enacted in 1962 with the passage of the Depository Library Act. That law set out the design of state-based regional depositories which accept and retain all publications distributed through the program permanently, supporting networks of selective depository libraries in their states that may choose the categories of publications they want to receive and discard them after a period of 5 years. Since 1962 there have been a succession of statutory and programmatic changes to the FDLP designed to expand the number of libraries participating in the program and provide it with the technological and other means necessary to effectively support the communities they serve.

The most far-reaching of these changes was the enactment in 1993 of the GPO Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act (P.L. 103-40). This statute, which provided GPO with entry into the field of digital information dissemination, profoundly impacted the focus and operations of the FDLP. Subsequently, GPO created its first information website, *GPO Access*, which began operations in 1994 featuring online access to the Congressional Record, the Federal Register, and other key publications. At the request of the appropriations committees, in 1996 we prepared a plan for making the FDLP predominantly electronic and it did not take long before the vast majority of titles entering the program were digitally born. In 2009 GPO significantly upgraded its digital access servers with the introduction of FDsys, and last year the agency unveiled govinfo, which will be retired from beta within months.

Along with expanding the availability of the Government information, the introduction of digital dissemination to the FDLP has generated significant savings. In 1995, the first full year of GPO's online operations, the cost of producing and distributing millions of copies of printed publications to Federal depository libraries nationwide was funded at \$17.6 million, the equivalent today of \$27.9 million in constant dollars. For FY 2016, we funded this function at \$8.5 million, a reduction of more than 69% in constant dollar terms. Along with appropriations to GPO's Business Operations Revolving Fund, we have used the savings from reduced printing and distribution costs to pay for the

establishment and operation of our digital information dissemination operations, achieving additional savings for the taxpayers and vastly expanding public access to Government information.

The data below traces the growth in the number of titles we make available online compared with the declining trend in tangible titles in the program, a trend based on agency publishing practices, a decline in selection of paper by libraries, and because the majority of the public prefers online information:

<u>FY</u>	<u>Number of Digital Titles</u>	<u>Number of Tangible Titles</u>
2000	193,000	28,800
2005	301,600	12,900
2010	441,700	8,200
2016	1,600,000	4,500
2017	2,100,000	4,200 (to date)

The FDLP has nearly 25 years of experience in providing support to the depository library community nationwide in the field of both digital and print information within the provisions of chapters 19 and 41 of Title 44. We have been able to offer some new services using new technologies with congressional approval, but there is so much more that can be done.

In recent weeks, we have reviewed a multitude of proposals for updating chapter 19 from depository libraries, from library associations, from proposals collected by our Depository Library Council at the request of Director Vance-Cooks, from information professionals who support and utilize the resources of the FDLP, and from our professional staff. There are a number of consistent themes that appear among them, including the need to:

- preserve the FDLP as a free public resource;
- assure patrons of their privacy in using depository collections;
- make GPO responsible for the lifecycle management of digital and tangible Government information;
- redefine "Government publication" to explicitly include reference to digital information;
- establish collaborative mechanisms with other national libraries to assure a truly national collection of Government information, and reform the Catalog of U.S. Government Publications to show not only information on publications but where and how they can be accessed;
- protect the national asset that depository collections represent for present and future generations;

- provide for more flexibility for depository libraries to elect to receive Government information in the form and formats that best meet the needs of the communities they serve;
- ensure accountability by Federal agencies for supplying the FDLP with the information products they issue; and
- establish a system of grants to assist and support depository libraries in carrying out their informing missions, starting with regional depositories.

This is not an exhaustive list; no doubt there are other proposals that are available for consideration. Additionally, as the head of our FDLP staff, I want to also make it clear that, however chapter 19 is revised to meet today's needs, the revision needs to ensure that our staff are provided with the necessary funding and tools to carry out the program's mission.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for having me here this morning. This concludes my prepared remarks and I would happy to answer any questions you may have.