

Statement of Dr. James Billington
The Librarian of Congress
Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Fiscal 2010 Budget Request
June 4, 2009

Mr. Chairman, Senator Murkowski, and other Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to present the Library of Congress fiscal 2010 budget request.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply grateful to you and the subcommittee for your full support of our fiscal 2009 request. It has heartened and strengthened us at what we know is a time of extraordinary fiscal pressures on the federal government. In such a time, I feel a special obligation to stress the importance of what the Library of Congress is doing for America's future.

The Congress of the United States has been, quite simply, the greatest patron of a library in the history of the world. Its creation, the Library of Congress, is the largest and most diverse collection in human history of the world's knowledge in all languages and of the intellectual and artistic creativity of the American people in all its major recorded formats.

The Library's historic mission has been to serve the Congress and the American people by acquiring, preserving and making accessible its unique material and human resources. Its major challenge—and opportunity—in recent years has been to sustain and extend that mission amidst one of the greatest revolutions in history in how knowledge is generated and communicated.

Our task has been, in effect, to superimpose new digital processes and services onto those of traditional artifactual library processes—while preserving and exemplifying the human values of the older book culture that helped create the free, open and knowledge-based democracy that we serve. In the course of meeting this challenge, we have undertaken a far greater range and volume of innovative processes and services than ever before with one thousand less FTEs than in our peak pre-digital year of 1992.

Congressional vision and support has made it possible to continue to add important new acquisitions and to sustain unique preservation activities. Thanks to the Congress' building a direct passageway from the Capitol Visitor Center into the Thomas Jefferson Building, we have greatly increased numbers of visitors to see an entire new series of interactive exhibits culminating in the centerpiece of the Lincoln bicentennial that displays for the first time in 50 years the key original documents of Lincoln's presidency in his own hand. We were glad to welcome the creation of a Library of Congress Caucus in the course of 2008. And we are pleased to note the steady increase

of the use of the Members Room and other Library facilities now that the tunnel directly connects the Library to the Capitol Visitor Center and to the Capitol itself.

Thanks to Congressional support and the unprecedented generosity of David Packard and the Packard Humanities Institute, the magnificent new Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Virginia is now up and running under its outstanding new director, Patrick Loughney. The Packard Campus is, in essence, a high-capacity digital preservation facility for our massive and largely perishable audio and film collections. We are now able to save many collections that would otherwise have deteriorated and been lost forever.

We are now in the process of hiring 39 new staff, and the Packard Campus is well-launched. The film preservation lab is operational and digital preservation of sound recordings, television, and radio broadcasts preservation work has started.

I am pleased to report that our National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is on schedule with the Digital Talking Book program. We have received the first five thousand machines and are sending them to eight regional libraries for user testing. We will also send the first book cartridges to these regional libraries next week.

On April 21, 2009, the Library, in cooperation with UNESCO, launched our new World Digital Library. Within hours of going online, this multilingual and multi-medial site had attracted 600 thousand visits and more than 7 million page views. Our National Digital Library/American Memory site also began with a relatively small number of high quality, one-of-a-kind cultural treasures but has now steadily grown to more than 15 million online primary source files with educational enhancements.

Fiscal 2010 Budget Request

We are requesting a total fiscal 2010 budget of \$699.4 million, representing a \$52.6 million or 8.1 percent increase over fiscal 2009 funding levels. The majority of this increase represents funding for mandatory pay and price level increases totaling \$29.8 million or 4.6 percent. Funding adjustments to support ongoing projects, totaling \$16.6 million, and non-recurring funding for projects that are ending (-\$13.7 million), represent a total of \$2.9 million or 0.4 percent. The remaining 3.1 percent or \$20 million represents the focus of our fiscal 2010 budget request, seeking support for investment in the Library's technical infrastructure.

Modernizing the Aging Technology Infrastructure - \$20 million

Infrastructure - \$15.4 million

The mandatory pay and price level increases are critical for keeping the Library whole, but our highest programmatic funding priority in fiscal 2010 is an increase in base funding to update and enhance the Library's technology infrastructure, upon which the

progress of all service units of the Library depends. The Library requests \$15.4 million to modernize our technology. This investment will fund: core technology, content management, and content delivery—three areas that are inextricably linked. We need an updated technology infrastructure before we can construct a foundation for bringing digital content into the Library, managing it so that it can be used by the Congress and the American people, and preserving it for future generations.

Up until now, the Library has benefited from a centralized catalog of print holdings, but the digital projects have been designed and maintained separately. This is entirely understandable in a time of experimentation and transition, but at this stage of our digital maturation, we are now poised to develop core infrastructure that is used by all parts of the Library, and to implement flexible, scalable systems that meet the broad needs of the institution. The launch of the World Digital Library has proven to be a useful catalyst for the development of a new technology platform with reusable and scalable components. This modern form of technical infrastructure will allow us to streamline and make more efficient our workflows and processes throughout the Library.

The 21st century Library is increasingly multi-medial. Our budget request will allow the Library to build sustainable systems to manage digital content of many varieties: video, audio, text, and images. Such technical systems will allow us to manage all of these formats in more cost-efficient, integrated ways. The funding we are requesting will also allow us to make these multi-media materials available to the Congress and other users in the ways they now expect: fast, convenient, and easy-to-use.

Legislative Information System - \$1.6 million

One of the Library's key means of providing information to the Congress is through the Legislative Information System (LIS), which was first made available in the 105th Congress. This system provides Members and their staff with on line access to the most current and comprehensive legislative information. The LIS has been developed under the direction of the House Committee on House Administration and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. It has been a collaborative project of several legislative branch offices and agencies. CRS has responsibility for overall coordination of the retrieval system. The Library is responsible for its technical development and operation.

We are requesting a one-time investment of \$1.6 million to update the current LIS so that it can meet growing demands. The new concept of operations will be based on a thorough assessment of the current system and develop an architecture that provides enhancements for users to better perform discovery, navigation, and retrieval across the entire spectrum of legislative content. The new system will take a modular approach to functions such as search and storage, so that they can be independently improved in the future. The Library will reconfigure LIS in consultation with House, Senate, Government Printing Office and CRS data providers.

Targeted User Interactivity - \$3 million

Finally, we request an investment of \$3 million to support the broad expansion of public access to the Library's collections and services on-site and online through the testing, evaluation, and adoption of emerging new technologies for the K-12 and teacher communities. Successful implementation of the Library of Congress Experience in the Thomas Jefferson Building has dramatically increased public awareness and unleashed the educational potential of the Library and its collections through the creative application of new interactive programs. Visitorship is up nearly 30 percent since its initial launch in April of 2008.

Improving Access, Capabilities, and Services

Over the past six months, the Congressional Research Service has shown its exceptional capacity to serve the Congress under extraordinary and time-sensitive conditions. It provided comprehensive analysis and legislative support during the financial crisis, the auto industry crisis, the fiscal 2009 appropriations bill and the fiscal 2010 budget resolution. It produced more than 100 reports for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 alone. This year it has identified more than 170 active issues for which it will support Congress in every step of the legislative process.

We ask for \$1.8 million to enhance access to Congressional Research Service (CRS) expertise by modernizing the technical environment that supports it. These systems govern how CRS manages and supports its research operations, personnel systems, and the systems used to run, maintain, and update the CRS web site for Congress. An additional \$500 thousand is requested to purchase network storage and switch hardware to improve the IT and emergency backup capability of CRS.

The renewed LIS will also benefit the public THOMAS system. To continue to meet the public's need for legislative information, we request \$138 thousand to hire a web site manager who will develop a user interface and an improved navigation system for THOMAS users. The THOMAS site has seen a steady increase of inquiries from your constituents, and it is important that we make this web site more user friendly.

We request a one-time \$1.1 million increase in offsetting collections authority for the Copyright Licensing Division so that we can secure consulting services to help us convert from a manual to an electronic filing process. Electronic filing is needed to maintain reasonable operating costs in future years and to minimize increases that would be unacceptable to the Congress, copyright owners, and cable system operators.

The Library is requesting \$2.7 million to expand the availability and usefulness of legal materials collected and stored in the Global Legal Information Network (GLIN), a database of more than 160 thousand laws and related legal materials from 51 jurisdictions in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. In fiscal 2005, the Law Library launched a major upgrade of the GLIN system that vastly improved functionality and usability, including providing access in 13 different languages. GLIN has since attracted a global audience that has increased tenfold, exceeding its performance target by 800 percent. As

the system has improved, new jurisdictions have become members, the size of the database has increased, and the level of use continues to expand. This funding is specifically requested over a five-year period, to upgrade and refresh the hardware and software to sustain GLIN operations as the program continues to expand in content, usage, and membership. This funding will also further the Law Library's mission to support the foreign law research needs of the Congress, promote the rule of law between and among nations, and support the legal information needs of emerging democracies. The Law Library has created a private GLIN Foundation and will work to attract private financing over the long term. This request will cover the hosting and maintenance of GLIN to ensure the continuity of operations as new members join.

Reengineering Work Processes in Library Services

The Library staff increasingly relies on more current technologies to perform the new tasks that are required of them. We are assessing all of the workflows and processes to make the most effective use of present and emerging technologies. For Library Services (LS), where our core library functions are carried out, we are requesting \$1 million in contractual support for a three-year project to document and evaluate operational procedures and information technologies (IT) currently used in the 52 divisions of LS. We anticipate many opportunities to consolidate technology services within LS to create a more robust and integrated architecture and workflows. We will determine which data systems and services should be provided within LS and which should be provided centrally by the Library's Information Technology Services (ITS).

Managing and Securing Collections

We request \$1 million to continue the inventory management program that was initiated in fiscal 2002 as a cornerstone of the Library's Strategic Collections Security Plan, when Congress directed the Library to conduct an item-level inventory of its general collections. We have made reasonably good progress with that inventory; however, when we began moving general collections to Ft. Meade, we quickly recognized that our most important inventory goal had to be the effective retrieval of materials moved there. Happily, we have achieved a 100 percent success rate in retrieving requested items from that location. Now, as we return to the original objective of conducting an item-level inventory of our general collections, we are working with the commercial sector to explore new technology options for this process. Some of these practices are already in place at Ft. Meade. The scope of this effort is unprecedented. We are grateful for Congressional attention and support for this large and complex endeavor.

To ensure that the Library's heritage assets are preserved for use by current and future generations, we are asking for \$3.6 million in start up and new operational costs for Ft. Meade Storage Modules 3 and 4, which will house our special collections. This kind of housing for the Library's special collections is crucial to the Library's long-term strategy to provide for their security and preservation, as well as to provide sound space

management and inventory management. This relocation will dramatically increase the life expectancy of these vulnerable collections.

The operation of Modules 3 and 4 will be more intensive and expensive than the implementation of Modules 1 and 2, involving the expense of new hardware and software, collections protection and preservation, moving, on-site support staff, and facility management, largely because we are moving special format materials to Modules 3 and 4, while Modules 1 and 2 house general collections. This year the Library is absorbing some costs associated with the opening of Modules 3 and 4. Base funding is needed in fiscal 2010 for start-up and operational costs that will allow the Library to meet requirements in the areas of security, preservation, space management, and inventory management. With your support, we also will be able to conduct construction planning for Module 5 and prepare facility designs for Modules 6 and 7. The Architect of the Capitol has included \$16 million in fiscal 2010 request for construction of Storage Module 5, which will help alleviate overcrowding on Capitol Hill and address serious concerns about safety, retrieval, and preservation.

The construction of storage modules at Ft. Meade has been one of the more significant preservation advances for the Library in decades. In short, this program has ensured that the Library of Congress remains the mint record of America's creativity by allowing continued acquisition of America's creative output and providing optimal storage conditions for our existing works.

Additional Requirements

We are also asking for \$238 thousand for collections security on Capitol Hill, for extended reading room security guard services. Other requested funding includes \$2 million for the final increment of mandated funding for Capital Security Cost Sharing, \$2 million for modernized, environmentally friendly custodial services, \$300 thousand for facility design services for more complex renovations, and \$334 thousand for escape hoods for the visiting public.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, I recognize that difficult choices are necessary in this economic climate. The Library has already recognized the need to sustain our core functions with level or reduced resources. We believe that the key to continued success is to make more effective use of technology. The \$52.6 million we are requesting is an investment to ensure that the Library stays current with the new technology in today's Internet-based world while we continue to maintain traditional services. With your support, the Library will continue to perform its historic mission to make its resources available and useful to the Congress and the American people and to sustain and preserve the world's most extensive collection of knowledge and creativity for future generations. I believe that, with the careful investments I have outlined, the Library will continue, renew, and expand its role in our knowledge-based democracy—today and in the days to come. Thank you.