

**Statement of Carla Hayden
The Librarian of Congress
Before the
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
March 22, 2023**

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Library's fiscal 2024 budget request.

The Library of Congress (Library) has built one of the largest collections of human knowledge ever assembled, in support of our mission to engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of information and creativity. In pursuit of its vision that all Americans are connected to the Library of Congress, the Library is committed to making this knowledge and creativity more discoverable, accessible, relevant, and useful.

The Library is an authoritative source of knowledge that enriches the American people in countless ways. We serve many customers: Congress, Copyright users, researchers, visitors, and blind and print disabled citizens, among many others. We directly serve the American public with programs like the Veterans History Project that preserve and make accessible the firsthand recollections of U.S. military veterans, and Teaching with Primary Sources that allows teachers in local school districts to create curricula and develop apps using the Library's digitized primary sources. The Library is in the forefront of making its resources available and useful to those who come here and in digital form for those who cannot.

In fiscal 2022, the Library returned to normal operations for the visiting public after building capacity limits and mask requirements were lifted in the third quarter. More visitors and researchers returned on site, reading rooms reopened and in-person events multiplied, while popular virtual programming that began during the pandemic continued. With the support of Congress, the Library continued to build collections in multiple formats and engage users in a variety of ways. Today, the physical collections contain nearly 175 million items, with many more in digital form.

Robust service to Congress and all Americans continued across the Library. The Congressional Research Service's (CRS's) Congress.gov sites — the Constitution Annotated, CRS Reports and Congress.gov — drew 40.8 million visits during the fiscal year. The U.S. Copyright Office (USCO) transferred 626,595 works, with an estimated value of nearly \$48 million, to the Library for possible addition to the collections. The Library's Center for Learning, Literacy and Engagement produced a year full of in-person and virtual programming, including the National Book Festival. At the end of fiscal 2022, new collections Module 6, completed in 2021, was 36 percent filled. Over the past year, the Library's Preservation Directorate performed 8.7 million preservation actions on books, serials, prints, photographs, manuscripts and other items.

Notably, the Library's digital engagement increased dramatically since the start of the pandemic. In fiscal 2022, loc.gov recorded 392.4 million page views during 105 million visits from 74 million unique users to National Library sites. On the Library's social media platforms, engagement has doubled and even tripled on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and Library YouTube content received 15.8 million views.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the ongoing and remarkable support that this committee and all of Congress give to the Library. In particular, I appreciate the initial funding you have provided for major Information Technology (IT) investments that we are implementing and continuously improving to meet user expectations for greater access and new and enhanced tools. These investments include the Enterprise Copyright System (ECS); CRS's Integrated Research and Information System (IRIS); the National Library Service's Braille Audio Reading by Download (BARD) and next generation devices; the Library Collections Access Platform (L-CAP); Congress.gov; and the Library's core IT infrastructure and IT security.

I would also like to give special thanks for your support of the Library's Visitor Experience initiative over the last four years. We are working closely with the Architect of the Capitol on final designs, and construction is expected to be underway by the end of the fiscal year. Our goal is to have our engaging new gallery spaces open to the public for the nation's semiquincentennial, in 2026. Further, in addition to the funds appropriated by Congress, we are close to having raised \$20 million in private donations for this effort. It is a testament to the Library's public engagement and offerings that donors large and small from across the country are contributing to this impactful initiative that will ultimately provide significant value for Congress and its constituents.

I come before you today to discuss the Library's fiscal 2024 appropriations request of \$940.8 million, which represents a 7.5 percent increase over the Library's fiscal 2023 enacted appropriation, including \$45.8 million in mandatory pay and price level increases. The budget request reflects the resources needed to sustain the Library's mission of service to Congress and the American people, and its vision-driven efforts to make the Library more user centered, digitally enabled, and data driven. It builds on multiyear strategic efforts to stabilize and optimize advanced IT systems and business processes, while at the same time enhancing access and customer services. And it invests in the future, ensuring that the Library can safeguard and support its collections, services, and workforce in person and online.

The budget request is carefully aligned with the goals and objectives of the Library's Strategic Plan: to expand access, enhance services, optimize resources, and measure impact. Requests for additional resources to support new or expanded programs are grouped in three interconnected and mutually reinforcing areas: (1) sustaining continuous technology development; (2) enhancing services and expanding access; and (3) strengthening expertise in other key areas.

With the understanding that mandatory pay increases and the effects of inflation on the cost of materials and services we procure are driving 70 percent of our fiscal 2024 request, we have taken great care to make only programmatic requests that are necessary and have the greatest impact on our service to Congress and the American people. We understand the current fiscal environment and the challenge you face in trying to meet the needs of the Library of Congress while being mindful of the taxpayer.

Sustaining Continuous Technology Development

Recognizing that technology is essential to its mission of engaging, inspiring, and informing Congress and the American people with an enduring source of knowledge and creativity, the Library has adopted a continuous development model to sustainably evolve business operations and digital offerings. This approach integrates IT innovation, design, and delivery efforts to manage the increasingly complex technology landscape, reduce risk, and sustain digital transformation. Following industry best practices, and recommendations from the Government Accountability Office and the Library's Office of the Inspector General, the Library's continuous development approach ensures major IT investments are continuously improved in incremental, manageable steps, to meet user expectations for greater access and new and enhanced tools. The requested funding and staffing will bolster the Library's ability to sustain continuous development efforts, keep pace with digital advancement, and ensure that technology can continue to be harnessed to deliver exceptional services to all Library users.

USCO Enterprise Copyright System – Technology Transformation

The USCO continues to reach major milestones in developing the new Enterprise Copyright System (ECS), a transformative technological investment. The once paper-based Copyright Recordation process is now online, and the new Copyright Public Records system is now in operation. By 2024, ECS Recordation, ECS Public Records, ECS Licensing, and ECS Service Requests will be in full public use. Additional ECS applications will be available to the public in fiscal 2025, with the ECS Registration system planned to go live in fiscal 2026.

The budget requests a permanent base for continuous development of the ECS. Requested funding will bring in new staff and sustain a number of existing staff to implement a collaborative USCO/ Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) continuous development program that will sustain and keep ECS and other systems up-to-date with new features, enhancements and applications. It will also increase the functionality of ECS core services and add new services. Building an innovative ECS not only meets the expectations of today's copyright users, but also can accommodate changing needs and technological advances thanks to the continuous development approach. Sustained investment is essential for our long-term success in meeting the needs of the copyright community.

NLS – Technology and Service Delivery

Congressional investment in the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled's (NLS's) efforts to modernize its business practices and associated IT systems, implement digital braille delivery, and develop cost-effective digital content delivery to new devices has resulted in important improvements for NLS patrons. To meet the evolving needs and expectations of its expanding patron base, NLS developed and piloted next generation devices, including DA2 (Digital Advanced Player 2), a web-based wireless system that replaces the original digital talking-book machine, which is an end-of-life product based on 20-year-old technology, and the eReader, a refreshable braille device that is in growing demand. Both the digital talking-book machine and eReader devices connect to the BARD Braille and audio download service. Requested funding will significantly increase the reach of these popular devices, making available 145,000 DA2 devices and 4,000 eReader devices to blind and print disabled patrons over a five-year period.

As an outgrowth of technology modernization, today, NLS is critically dependent on 19 IT systems for content delivery, content production, library services, marketing and communications, customer service, and project and program management. Consistent with NLS's mission, these systems must always provide the highest level of accessibility to NLS patrons and blind staff, and must allow these staff to be as productive as sighted persons when using them. Requested funding includes staffing in NLS and the OCIO dedicated to continuous development for NLS systems that will enhance efficiency and improve access to services for the growing population of blind and print disabled Americans. Again, sustained investment is essential for our long-term success.

Enhancing Services and Access

Legislative Support – CRS Bill Summaries, Congress.gov, and Quantitative “Big Data” Analysis

CRS has experienced greater demand for CRS Bill Summaries, one of its most widely used products, thanks in part to technological advancements that have resulted in new applications to automate the functions for Members to introduce bills. The volume of bills has increased by about one-third since the 115th Congress. Although CRS took extraordinary measures to keep pace with the volume and increased complexity of incoming bills, such as significantly shortening the length of bill summaries, a bill summary backlog of over 2,400 items remains. The request includes funding for additional staff with subject matter expertise to support CRS Bill Summaries and other analytical products created by the Legislative Information Services team, which makes searchable content available to congressional and public users of Congress.gov.

The request also seeks additional staff to enhance support for Congress and to create a permanent capacity for continuous development for Congress.gov. Increased staffing will ensure the day-to-day data integrity of the system and provide congressional operational support to include continuous modernization of congressional collections, formats, and capabilities, as well as support of congressional access to emerging application programming interfaces.

Lastly, to meet emerging demand, the budget additionally requests funding for a pilot program to augment and enhance CRS's ability to perform quantitative analysis of both research and operational "big data" for congressional clients. The request includes staffing to strengthen existing capabilities and an investment in the tools and datasets required to broaden the depth of quantitative analysis and models by leveraging big data. This program investment will establish a base process and increased capacity for in-depth data analysis in CRS.

Strengthening Expertise in Key Areas

Contracts and Grants – Support for IT and Other Acquisitions

The request includes additional staffing for the Library's Contracts and Grants Directorate to keep pace with increasing demands for contracted products and services for everything from new collection display cases to major IT systems. The Library, like other federal agencies, is facing substantial attrition of its contracting staff as workloads increase and contracts become more complex, particularly for IT-related acquisitions. These are hard-to-fill positions and a government-wide shortage of contract specialists makes recruitment and retention even more challenging. The requested funds will also acquire a Web-enabled solution for the grants lifecycle to support the application, award, and management processes.

OCIO – Enterprise Architecture and Digital Accessibility

The Library requests funding to establish a Digital Accessibility program within OCIO to meet growing demands for accessibility services including consultation, compliance assessment, and remediation and to improve access to the Library's digital products, materials, and services for Americans with disabilities. Direct patron and staff feedback, along with preliminary expert assessments, point to a large gap between the Library's products, materials, and services and federal/international accessibility standards. The Library seeks to expand the program within OCIO so that accessibility is addressed at the beginning of the software development cycle while also enhancing current digital products.

The Library also requests funding to strengthen its Enterprise Architecture Program Office (EAPO) given the increasing complexity of the Library's IT programs and portfolios, together with a rapidly growing demand for new and enhanced user tools and technology solutions. The budget requests funding and staff to increase EAPO's capacity to produce complex architectural artifacts such as technological roadmaps and solution overviews, and to support robust strategic IT planning with detailed technology solution proposals that include accurate project cost and schedule estimations.

In closing, the Library's fiscal 2024 Congressional Budget Justification advances necessary work begun in previous years to move the Library forward into the future in an enduring way that preserves its resources, unrivaled anywhere else in the world, and makes them accessible for those who will come after us, as technological change accelerates. We recognize the challenges resulting from the current fiscal environment, and these programmatic requests represent the most necessary and impactful priorities that will enhance the Library's service to Congress and the American people.

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for supporting the Library of Congress and for your consideration of our fiscal 2024 budget request.