

**Statement of The Honorable Hugh Nathaniel Halpern
Before the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
FY 2024 Appropriations Request of the Government Publishing Office**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am honored to present the Government Publishing Office's (GPO's) fiscal year 2024 appropriations request. I thank you and your staff for your past support of GPO and I look forward to working closely with you during my time as Director. For the coming fiscal year, I am requesting appropriations in the amount of \$132,488,000, an increase of \$2,634,000 over our FY 2023 appropriation.

This marks just the third time in a decade that GPO has requested an increase in appropriated funds and incorporates increased costs in labor and materials, while accommodating certain initiatives of importance to Congress. Our FY 2024 request represents a two percent increase over FY 2023, less than a third of the increase in the consumer price index during calendar year 2022. It is also 10.2 percent lower than the Agency's all-time high appropriation of \$147.5 million in FY 2010.

GPO runs as a business enterprise and appropriated funds represent a comparatively small portion of GPO's overall revenue and operating capital. Over 88 percent—or \$934 million—of GPO's FY 2022 revenue of \$1.06 billion came from billings of its other Federal customers, including the State Department, the courts, the Department of Defense, and many others. For FY 2024, we estimate that direct appropriations may be an even smaller portion of our overall budget.

Charting a Course for the Future in FY 2022

At GPO, fiscal year 2022 was one of significant accomplishment and encouraging progress. After a challenging 2020, the Agency was able to close out our books with a net positive income for the 2nd straight year, retaining \$26.2 million in FY 2022.

We are also proud that our efforts to modernize and build a dynamic and welcoming workplace are starting to attract attention. Forbes Magazine recently rated us—for the 2nd year running!—as one of America's Best Midsize Employers after having also honored us as one of the nation's Best Employers for Veterans in 2022.

To help chart a new course for our agency, in FY 2022 we released an ambitious five-year strategic plan for fiscal years 2023 through 2027 and updated our vision and mission statements to better reflect GPO's role in our digital present. Today, GPO's vision is that of an *America Informed*, and we aim to achieve our mission of publishing trusted information for the Federal Government to the American people guided by four key values—honesty, kindness, effectiveness, and inclusiveness.

We also convened the Task Force on a Digital Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) to modernize the FDLP to meet the challenges of the future. The Task Force issued recommendations in December and I recently shared with Congress a set of legislative proposals consistent with those recommendations.

During FY 2022, GPO completed the transition from the production of the ePassport for the State Department to the Next Generation Passport (NGP) Program. This transition reaffirmed the United States' position as the global leader in the most innovative and secure international travel credentials and concluded production of the ePassport after a production run of more than 220 million units between 2007 and 2022. All told we produced a total of 18,151,000 ePassports and NGPs in FY 2022.

GPO's single biggest challenge is maintaining a workforce prepared to carry on its work well into the future. Fifty percent of our workforce is eligible to retire in the next four years. That's one out of every two proofreaders, presspeople, bookbinders, carpenters, electricians, IT specialists, contracting officers, and a host of other trades and professions working at GPO. To ensure that GPO continues to attract and retain an exceptional workforce in the years ahead, we established the Recent Graduates Program and restarted our Apprenticeship Program in FY 2022.

We also readied ourselves to execute the requirements of the Congressionally Mandated Reports Act, which directs GPO to build a portal to make those reports publicly available, and we celebrated the 9 billionth retrieval of Government information from Agency websites since GPO began publishing Government information in 1994.

Our Customer Services business unit awarded \$477 million in competitive contracts to private-sector printers nationwide supporting thousands of jobs in all 50 states, and their biennial survey revealed a customer satisfaction rate of 95.3 percent.

We produced tickets and credentials for the Supreme Court nomination hearing of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson and had the solemn honor of creating the Lying In State Memorial Programs for Representative Don E. Young, former Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid, and former Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole.

And—for the 26th consecutive year—GPO's independent outside auditor provided us with an unmodified, or clean, opinion on our annual financial statements.

GPO's FY 2024 Appropriations Request

For FY 2024, GPO is requesting an \$2,634,000 increase in appropriations to \$132,488,000. This increase will account for changes in our labor and raw materials costs and also fund certain ongoing projects of importance to congressional customers.

This would be GPO's only third proposed increase in appropriations since FY 2014 and is actually 10.2 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, and providing new and improved services at lower costs.

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, those balances are declining which forces GPO to request additional funds if we are to continue our current pace of development and innovation.

Our FY 2024 request includes \$83,000,000 for congressional publishing, just \$8,000 more than our FY 2023 appropriation. It is based on our estimates of Congress' likely needs and available unexpended balances. It also incorporates increased costs for raw materials and labor. In constant-dollar terms it represents a 35 percent reduction for congressional publishing appropriations since FY 2010.

Our request for our public information programs (PIP) account, through which we administer the nationwide Federal Depository Library Program, is \$37,388,000. This represents an increase of \$2,131,000—or 6 percent—over FY 2023, and will cover the costs of providing Federal Government publications in digital and tangible formats to 1,100 Federal depository libraries nationwide, cataloging and indexing, and distributing documents to recipients designated by law and international exchanges. In addition to increased compensation and materials costs, this request also includes some implementation costs attributed to the Congressionally Mandated Reports Act.

Even with this proposed increase, the PIP appropriation will be 8.6 percent lower than the amount appropriated in FY 2010, or 34 percent lower in constant-dollar terms.

The final component of our appropriations request is for a total of \$12,100,000 for GPO's revolving fund to support capital investments and information technology upgrades, which represents an increase of \$495,000 over amounts appropriated in FY 2023. 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 the high level of service they expect.

This request will support three specific capital investment projects that will be familiar to the Subcommittee, as they represent longstanding GPO priorities.

First, we are seeking direct appropriations support for our continued development of the XPub composition system, which is intended to fully replace our proprietary MicroComp composition system, which is more than 30 years old.

A transformational project for GPO, XPub is being deployed on a product-by-product basis. Our current release is in testing with our House and Senate customers and is slated to be in production with the House, Senate, and GPO Bill End during FY 2023. Features in this release include integration with House and Senate XML authoring tools for bills, and a new responsive HTML display for congressional bills and Public Laws.

If approved, our \$6,575,000 appropriation request will keep XPub development and deployment on track in FY 2024. 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 FY 2024 request for increased capital investment appropriations would support continued development of the 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 \$5,375,000 for GovInfo is \$500,000 less than the amount appropriated in FY 2023, and it would be divided between infrastructure investments (\$1,875,000) and development investments (\$3,500,000), including the digitization of historical content.

With the Subcommittee's sustained support, GPO has been able to add hundreds of thousands of additional documents to the GovInfo online repository each year—over 152,000 content packages were added in FY 2022—and the public's usage of GovInfo continues to grow, with more than 868 million retrievals from GovInfo in FY 2022.

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 threat attacks (APTs) to its information technology systems.

Lastly, before I conclude, I want to add that, as required by section 1604(c) of the Legislative Branch Inspectors General Independence Act, we have forwarded our Inspector General's request for \$7,243,000 in budget authority for FY 2024 as part of our FY 2024 Budget Submission. Currently that request is 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 separate appropriation.

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to present GPO's FY 2024 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.