
April 7, 2021

The Honorable Tim Ryan
Chairman
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: ABA Support for the FY 2022 Funding Request for the Library of Congress

Dear Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Herrera Beutler:

On behalf of the American Bar Association (ABA), the largest voluntary association of lawyers and legal professionals in the world, I write to express our strong support for the FY 2022 budget request of the Library of Congress (LOC). As consumers of the resources of the Library and Law Library of Congress (LLOC), we cannot overstate the value of these unrivaled world-class institutions to Congress, the legal profession, American business, academia, and the public. We respectfully request that you fund the LOC's FY 2022 budget request in its entirety.

In recognition of the limited funding that your subcommittee has available to allocate, the LOC is requesting only a modest increase for FY 2022 over its FY 2021 enacted appropriation. New challenges to the safety of Library and Law Library staff, collections, and infrastructure will require new investments on top of their absorbing unforeseen costs in FY 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While we recognize and deeply appreciate the additional support Congress provided to the LOC in FY 2021 – which allowed the Library to improve cybersecurity and proceed with several important modernization and storage initiatives – the modest funding increase requested for FY 2022 is needed to cover over \$24 million in mandatory pay and price level increases and to help the LOC continue to advance overdue improvements.

Founded by Congress in 1800 as its research arm, the Library of Congress is the oldest federal cultural institution in the nation. Over its history, the Library of Congress has grown into an unparalleled public resource of staggering proportion, housing more than 168 million items in 90 collections, including books, periodicals, film, and audio recordings. Similarly, the Law Library of Congress, authorized by Congress in 1832, has grown from its modest beginnings to become the world's largest repository of legal materials, including more than 2.9 million legal volumes and periodicals.

We know through our nearly 90-year collaboration with the Law Library that it supports all three branches of government with complex foreign, comparative, and international research and guidance. In addition, the executive branch's reliance on the Law Library's foreign law expertise is steadily increasing, as are the number of requests for legal opinions from federal executive branch agencies.

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The Law Library's contributions to Congress during the current pandemic have included over 400 reports on many different subjects, including many involving national security and issues of comparative law relating to government operations in emergency situations. The LLOC conducted research, prepared reports, and collaborated with federal officials at numerous agencies including the Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, and CIA. In addition to supporting Congress and the executive branch, the Law Library also leveraged technology to increase its contributions to the judiciary, the public, and the legal profession during the pandemic through nimble expansion of webinars offered through its new Legal Research Institute; expanded access to digitized materials; and continued operation of services such as "Ask a Librarian," its *In Custodia Legis* blog, and Congress.gov.

The magnitude of these priceless collections in both size and significance to our nation and to the world cannot be overstated. Their immense scope creates unique challenges, including managing their daily growth and administration. These are our national treasures, and the funding required to keep the LOC and LLOC running at full capacity is a wise investment of taxpayer dollars.

The priorities identified by the Law Library for next year are important to fulfilling its mission to serve Congress and the nation effectively. These priorities include preserving hard copies of legal materials; further developing access to these materials online through digitization; and strengthening staff expertise in foreign law and collection stewardship. Another important priority is modernizing the Law Library's facilities by replacing its third quadrant of compact shelving, which has become dangerously unusable and houses a significant portion of the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of international, foreign, national, and comparative legal resources. The LLOC must also address the critical area of cybersecurity to protect congressional and other high-value digital assets within the Law Library. We strongly support these priorities.

The ABA respectfully urges Congress to grant the LOC funding request for FY 2022. We appreciate Congress's historical support for the Library of Congress and the Law Library of Congress and hope it will continue to find the means to protect and enhance the value of these treasures built over the past 220 years for all Americans, now and for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions about this request or the ABA's work with the Library and Law Library of Congress, please contact Kenneth Goldsmith in our Governmental Affairs Office at (202) 662-1789 or kenneth.goldsmith@americanbar.org.

Sincerely,



Patricia Lee Refo
President, American Bar Association

cc: Members, House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch