

**OVERSIGHT OF THE
GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
**COMMITTEE ON HOUSE
ADMINISTRATION**
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

—————
MARCH 3, 2020
—————

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

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WASHINGTON : 2020

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OVERSIGHT OF THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:07 a.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Zoe Lofgren [chairperson of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Lofgren, Davis of California, Fudge, Aguilar, Davis of Illinois, and Loudermilk.

Staff Present: Jamie Fleet, Staff Director; Khalil Abboud, Deputy Staff Director; Mariam Malik, Staff Assistant; David Tucker, Senior Counsel and Parliamentarian; Jose Morales, Staff Assistant; Matthew Schlesinger, Oversight Counsel; Veleter Mazyck, Chief of Staff for Chairwoman Fudge; Evan Dorner, Legislative Assistant for Representative Aguilar; Lisa Sherman, Chief of Staff for Representative Susan Davis; Jennifer Daulby, Minority Staff Director; Tim Monahan, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Susannah Johnston, Minority Professional Staff; and Roberto Estrada, Minority Staff Assistant.

The CHAIRPERSON. A quorum being present, the Committee will come to order. Good morning. I would like to thank our witnesses and those here in the audience for joining us. We are here today for an oversight hearing of the Government Publishing Office and the important services the agency provides to Congress, Federal agencies, and to the American people.

Tomorrow, GPO will turn 159 years old, having the distinction of opening its doors on the same day that President Lincoln was inaugurated for his first term, March 4, 1861. When Congress was debating the creation of a printing office in the summer of 1860, Congressman John Gurley from Ohio said: "It is unlike any other department of government service. For ships, you can wait. For guns, you can generally wait. And, ordinarily, you are in no special hurry for the various munitions of war. But you cannot be deprived of your printing for a single day without serious embarrassment and loss of time."

He went on to further say that the agency "bears no analogy to any other departments of the Government."

And so, reliably for 159 years, GPO has told the story of the proceedings of our government. But as our government has changed, GPO has changed along the way. Indeed, as the format and delivery of government information has increasingly evolved from paper-based to digital, GPO underwent a statutory name change

from Government Printing Office to Government Publishing Office to reflect the changing nature of the agency that printed the Emancipation Proclamation.

GPO is an indispensable partner to Congress. I have come to know this firsthand, not only as Member of Congress but also as chairperson on the Joint Committee on Printing for the 116th Congress. From publishing the *Congressional Record*, committee prints and hearings, the phonebooks, stationery, the GPO makes it possible for us to do the jobs we were sent here to do.

Through its secure identification and credentialing function, GPO makes it possible for us to cross international borders and secure our Federal buildings. In fiscal year 2019, GPO, in cooperation with the State Department, produced more than 15 million passports in Washington D.C., and at its secure facility in Stennis, Mississippi.

GPO and the State Department have also been developing a new line of passports, the NextGen Passport, making even more security improvements to what is currently one of the most secure credentials that you can get today.

Rare among Federal agencies, GPO actually makes money, realizing more than \$20 million in profit during fiscal year 2019. GPO's business processes, investments, and leveraging of new and existing technologies have enabled the agency to request flat funding levels for six consecutive years.

One example of GPO's financial success and self-sufficiency and a testament to its versatility is the agency distribution service, which provides over 55 Federal agencies with a comprehensive suite of logistic services including web hosting, distributions, storage, and order fulfillment of government information products. This success, however, would not be possible without the hard work of more than 1,600 dedicated public servants who work around the clock—literally—to fulfill the agency's mission and its commitment to its customers. I would like to give special thanks and recognition to them today.

GPO also does more than printing and publishing. The idea that government information should be freely and readily available to the American public dates back to the early 19th century when Congress directed the distribution of House and Senate Journals to institutions outside of the Federal Government. Since these humble beginnings, the Federal Depository Library Program has grown to more than 1,000 regional and selective libraries staffed by knowledgeable, trained experts who are committed to the values of the program, and we thank them for that.

Each member of this Committee represents at least one depository library. The Ranking Member and Representative Fudge are tied to the distinction to representing the most, with nine in each district.

The Federal Depository Library Program and govinfo website are incredible resources that foster the public trust. These free services make possible an educated, informed citizenry, a more transparent and accessible Federal Government, and through that they strengthen our democratic system.

Still, like all agencies, GPO faces challenges. The agency must steady itself from any instability caused by the recent prolonged

absent of a confirmed Director. GPO must also take the proper steps to ensure its future financial vitality by attracting and developing a talented workforce and continuing to be a leader in customer service for the entire Federal Government.

We hope the agency is in good hands under its new director, Hugh Halpern, a true House institutionalist, who I know will try to put his own mark on the agency that has told Congress' story for these last 159 years. And I will now recognize the Ranking Member for any opening statement he might like to provide.

[The statement of The Chairperson follows:]

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VICE CHAIRPERSON

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ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

JEN DAULBY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

Chairperson Zoe Lofgren Oversight of the Government Publishing Office March 3, 2020 Opening Statement

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Indeed, as the format and delivery of government information has increasingly evolved from paper-based to digital, GPO underwent a statutory name change from Government Printing Office to Government Publishing Office to reflect the changing nature of the agency that printed the Emancipation Proclamation.

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From publishing the Congressional Record, committee prints and hearings, to phone books and stationery, GPO makes it possible for us to do the jobs we were sent here to do.

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Unique among federal agencies, GPO actually makes money, realizing a more than \$20 million profit in fiscal year 2019.

GPO's sound business processes, strategic investments, and leveraging of new and existing technologies have enabled the agency to request flat funding levels for six consecutive years.

One good example of GPO's financial success and self-sufficiency, and a testament to its versatility, is the Agency Distribution Service, which provides over 55 federal agencies with a comprehensive suite of logistics services including web hosting, distribution, storage, and order fulfillment of government information products.

This success, though, would not be possible without the hard work of the more than 1600 dedicated public servants that work around the clock, literally, to fulfill the agency's mission and its commitment to its customers. I would like to give special thanks and recognition to them today.

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These free services make possible an educated, informed citizenry, a more transparent and accessible federal government and, through that, they strengthen our democratic system.

Still, like all agencies, GPO faces challenges. The agency must steady itself from any instability caused by the recent prolonged absence of a confirmed Director. GPO must also take the proper steps to ensure its future financial vitality by attracting and developing a talented workforce and continuing to be a leader in customer service for the entire federal government. Fortunately, I believe the agency is in good hands under its new Director, Hugh Halpern, a true House institutionalist who I know will endeavor to put his own mark on the agency that has told Congress' story for these last 159 years.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Thank you, Chairperson Lofgren. And it is always great to have folks from the GPO join us today. It is always also great to hear the history. I didn't know, I didn't do the math that GPO was open the day Abe Lincoln was sworn into office.

So thank you, Madam Chair, for that tidbit.

It is especially meaningful to me because I represent some of the areas that Abe Lincoln spent his youth and his career in and around Springfield, Illinois. And I joke today I still represent Lincoln because he is buried in Lincoln's Tomb which is in my district. And if you haven't rubbed the nose on Lincoln statue at Lincoln's Tomb, please do that. And now you can do that in honor of the birth of the GPO at the same time.

The GPO opened its doors, as Chairperson Lofgren said, in 1861, with its primary role of providing the printing needs of Congress. Eventually the GPO became known as an official disseminator of governmentwide information.

For nearly 160 years, Congress has relied upon the Government Publishing Office for their printing and publication needs. Much has changed since the agency's opening that day that Abe Lincoln was sworn in as our President, one of the biggest changes being the dramatic shift from print to digital media.

According to a 2013 NAPA study, approximately 97 percent of all Federal documents are born digital. And most users expect to be able to use those documents in their digital form. Demand for government-produced information is increasing, but the demand on GPO for print has dropped by half. The skyrocketing demand for digital formats has also led to a substantial increase in fugitive documents. These are Federal Government publications that should be retained by the GPO or one of its partners for the purpose of ensuring public access to government information. It is estimated that at least 50 percent of government publications are now fugitive.

Despite recognizing the need to adapt to new challenges, the GPO as well as other agencies across the board are struggling to keep pace with the advances in technology.

As Congress seeks to modernize in order to keep up with the rest of the Nation, GPO must address the evolving technological needs of Congress and its executive branch customers. With legislative drafting, Congress needs inoperable technology for text drafting and formatting. Converting documents back and forth between different tech languages is a time-consuming and outdated process. And it is just one of the many hurdles we should look to overcome.

Some of the challenges facing the GPO are institutional barriers that will gradually be overcome through new leadership at the GPO. But other challenges will require updating the statutes that govern the GPO through title 44 reform.

Tomorrow, March 4th, is the 159th anniversary of when GPO began its operation. And I am optimistic that, under Mr. Halpern's leadership and the entire team supporting him, GPO can position themselves for another century-and-a-half of meeting the needs of Congress, the United States Government, and the American people. I look forward to hearing our witnesses expound on these points and more. Thank you.

And, Madam Chair, I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Davis of Illinois follows:]

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Ranking Member Rodney Davis Oversight of the Government Publishing Office March 3, 2020 Opening Statement

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The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you very much. Other members may submit an opening statement as they wish. We will turn now to our witnesses.

First, let me introduce GPO Director Hugh Halpern, who was confirmed by the Senate on December 10th of last year. Mr. Halpern comes to the agency after a long career on Capitol Hill, where he served in key leadership and committee positions. A graduate of American University and George Mason University School, Mr. Halpern started as a House intern and was most recently Director of Floor Operations for then-Speaker Paul Ryan. He has also served numerous congressional committees. He was staff director for the Committee on Rules and worked as counsel to the Committees on Financial Services and Energy and Commerce.

In addition to his service to our outstanding committees, Mr. Halpern served as parliamentarian to the first Select Committee on Homeland Security, and general counsel to the Select Committee to Investigate the Voting Irregularities of August 2, 2007.

Outside of his congressional service, Mr. Halpern served as assistant parliamentarian for the Republican National Conventions in 2008, 2012, and 2016.

We also have Inspector General Michael Leary. He is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and Notre Dame Law School, and served in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence for 13 years, and in the Inspections Division of the CIA Office of the Inspector General. Mr. Leary served as executive for the strategic planning at the Council of the Inspector General on Integrity and Efficiency, or as it is most commonly known CIGIE; as senior attorney at the Department of Homeland Security; and senior advisor to the Under Secretary of the Department of Treasury from 1996 to 2001. Mr. Leary was assistant district attorney in Philadelphia and Boston.

In addition to his civilian service, Mr. Leary has 33 years of combined Active and Reserve service in the United States Marine Corps, including tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He received a Bronze Star as well as a Legion of Merit Award and retired from the Marine corps in 2016 as a colonel.

We are thankful to you for your service to our country, Mr. Leary, both in the civilian world as well as in your military service.

And, finally, we have the Superintendent of Documents, Laurie Hall, who leads the GPO's efforts to provide free public access to government information. Ms. Hall serves as the managing director of Library Services and Content Management, overseeing the Federal Depository Library Program, the Cataloging & Indexing Program, the International Exchange Service, and the By-Law Program.

Ms. Hall started her career with the GPO in 1985, serving in a number of positions within Library Services and Content Management, including supervisory program analyst, serials cataloger, cataloging section chief, cataloging branch chief, and director of bibliographic services.

Prior to arrival at GPO, Ms. Hall worked in all manner of libraries from the corporate world to academia. She earned her bachelor's degree in art history and American studies at the University

of Virginia, and her master's degree in library science at the Catholic University of America.

Now, at this time, I would ask unanimous consent that all members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and that all written statements be made part of the record.

And, without objection, that is so ordered.

I would like to remind the witnesses that your full written statements will be made part of our record. We would ask that your oral statement be about 5 minutes.

And we will first turn to you, Mr. Halpern, for your 5-minute statement.

STATEMENTS OF HUGH HALPERN, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.; MICHAEL P. LEARY, INSPECTOR GENERAL, GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.; AND LAURIE HALL, SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS, GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

STATEMENT OF HUGH HALPERN

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you, Madam Chairperson, Ranking Member Davis, and members of the Committee.

I am happy to be here today in my first appearance before the Committee on House Administration as Director of the Government Publishing Office. And if you will excuse me, I am getting used to being on this side of the table.

Today's hearing on oversight of GPO is a welcome opportunity to give you my sense of GPO's condition after just under 3 months on the job, as well as my vision for its future.

Tomorrow, as we have said, will mark 159 years since GPO opened its doors. And I am proud to say its future looks sound.

Financially, I am pleased to report that GPO completed fiscal year 2019 with \$36.2 million in net positive income after all adjustments. Our overall revenue was up \$63 million over fiscal year 2018, attributable largely to growth in secure documents and our print procurement program. This is the tenth straight year where GPO has finished the fiscal year in the black. Our success has allowed us to make some really important investments in our future. We have added six new digital ink jet presses to allow us to meet our customers' needs for both large and small jobs. We have also continued development of our XPub next-generation competition engine, using it to produce the current edition of the U.S. Code seven months faster than we did the last cycle. And we are working with our House and Senate partners to bring this technology to the production of bills, resolutions, and amendments within the next year.

Now, I can't take credit for any of these achievements. They are due to the hard work of my predecessors, our GPO leadership team, and GPO's more than 1,600 craftspeople and professionals.

While my colleague Laurie Hall will talk about our important public information work with our Federal Depository Library partners and Mike Leary will talk about his important work as inspector general, I want to take a moment to discuss the future of GPO's work for Congress. While Congress is not GPO biggest customer,

it is its most important. Its work is critical to the daily functioning of our democracy and also among the most labor-intensive of the work done at GPO.

When I was a staffer many years ago, I worked with this Committee and GPO and asked about changing the format of committee hearings after seeing how the Parliament of the United Kingdom formatted its documents. The most charitable way I can put it is that GPO was not ready to talk about changing, even if Congress was. Today is different.

With the advent of XPub and the installation of our new digital printing presses, GPO is finally ready to move beyond the constraints of merely printing to a model that focuses on content. My hope is that Congress has reached a point where it is ready to partner with GPO to create documents worthy of the 21st century. Based on my experience, I believe change is critical.

Because it is hard to produce these legislative documents and even harder to quickly glean knowledge from them, committees are turning to other kinds of products, like white papers or web pages, to communicate about legislation and oversight. And I personally believe that we lose something as a Nation when our formal documents are not accessible.

To see how this plays out, let's look at the first page of three committee reports on the slide that is up now. The first report on the left is from 1861 and was set with handset type. The second is from 1936 and was set with hot lead type. And the last was reported by this Committee in November and represents output from GPO's current digital typesetting system. All three look pretty similar. They use small type sizes and tight line spacing and are designed for the economy of printing, not for readability or accessibility.

Now, if you go to the next slide, you compare that with a similar kind of document from the U.K. House of Commons. That document prints on standard-sized paper, uses commercially typefaces, and it even uses color. And then, if you go to the next slide, it is equally readable on paper, on a screen, or on a phone.

We need to ensure that Congress' documents are accessible in any media, print, or digital. We also need to make them easier to produce so that the Committee counsel can put their effort into the content and not the formatting. If Congress is willing to partner with us to make these important changes, the end result will be documents that are easier to author, to produce, and to consume. And that accrues to everyone's benefit: Congress, GPO, and, most importantly, the public.

I stand ready to work with the Members of this Committee and the rest of Congress should you decide that improving the readability and accessibility of congressional documents is a goal worth pursuing. I am also committed to continuing GPO's record of progress, delivering for its customers at every turn.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, Mr. Davis, and members of the Committee, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The statement of Mr. Halpern follows:]

THE HONORABLE HUGH NATHANIAL HALPERN
Director
United States Government Publishing Office

**Prepared Statement before the
Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives**

On Oversight of the Government Publishing Office

March 3, 2020
10 A.M.
Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building



U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
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Thank you, Madam Chairperson, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Committee. I am happy to be here today in my first appearance before the Committee on House Administration as Director of the Government Publishing Office.

Today's hearing on oversight of GPO is a welcome opportunity to give you my sense of GPO's condition after about 3 months on the job and my vision for its future. This is particularly appropriate as the anniversary of GPO opening its doors is 159 years ago tomorrow.

GPO IS ON SOUND FOOTING

Today, I am pleased to be able to say that GPO is on very sound footing.

Financially, I am pleased to report that GPO completed fiscal year 2019 with \$36.2 million in net positive income after all adjustments. This is the 10th straight year where GPO has finished the fiscal year in the black. In addition, for the 23rd consecutive year, GPO's independent outside auditor issued a clean, or unmodified, opinion on our annual financial statement.



We continue to see growth in many of our product lines, particularly our secure identification and passport products. Last year, we produced more than 15 million passports for the Department of State and 4 million other secure credentials. We are working closely with the State Department to develop the machine tools and production processes necessary to ensure that the next generation U.S. passport continues to be the most secure identification document in the world.

During FY 2019, our **govinfo** online repository had more than 377 million retrievals and added over 121 thousand documents, allowing people all over the world easy access to U.S. Government documents.

GPO's positive financial results have allowed us to make investments over the past several years, modernizing equipment and building the tools we will need for the future. For instance, we have acquired six new digital inkjet presses and are working to incorporate them into our workflow. When fully online, they will vastly enhance our flexibility to meet our customers' needs for both large and small jobs.

We have also continued our development of our XPub next-generation composition engine, which will replace our current system which has been in service since the early 1980s. Working with the Office of the Law Revision Counsel, we were able to leverage XPub to produce the most recent edition of the United States Code seven months faster than the last cycle. Within a year's time, we expect to have deployed XPub to our partners in the House and Senate for the production of bills, resolutions, and amendments.

And we have done all of this while still delivering the best value for our customers each and every day.

I can't personally take credit for any of these achievements. They are all due to the hard work and perseverance of my predecessors, along with the dedicated members of our GPO leadership team and more than 1,600 craftspeople and professionals who kept the agency running until my confirmation.

THE FUTURE OF CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

While my colleague Laurie Hall, the Superintendent of Documents, will talk about our important work with our Federal Depository Library partners and Mike Leary will talk about his important work as Inspector General, I want to take a moment to discuss the future of GPO's work for Congress.

While Congress is not GPO's biggest customer, it is our most important. Your work is critical to the daily functioning of our democracy. It is also among the most labor-intensive work done at GPO.

After seeing how the United Kingdom Parliament formatted their documents years ago when I was a Rules Committee staffer, I worked with this committee and GPO to ask about changing the format of committee hearings. The most charitable way I can describe the results of that meeting is that GPO was not ready to talk about changing, even if some in Congress were.

Today is different.

With the advent of XPub, our new composition system, and the installation of our new digital printing presses, GPO is finally ready to move beyond the constraints of mere printing to a model that focuses on content and is agnostic when it comes to media. My hope is that Congress has reached a point where it is ready to partner with GPO to create documents worthy of the 21st century.



Personally, I believe change is critical. During my time working in the Capitol, I saw first-hand committees short-changing their efforts to produce legislative documents, placing their efforts into white papers, web pages, and other unofficial media.

The reasons for this shift away from documents like formal committee reports are largely two-fold: they are (1) hard to create and (2) the resulting media are dense and inflexible. That creates problems for both the author and reader alike. The author doesn't want to create the document because it's time-intensive to prepare and may not communicate his intent as well he might like; and the reader doesn't want to read the document because it's dense, hard to access, and doesn't transmit information all that well.

This presents critical problems for all involved. It means that Congress isn't effectively explaining the operation of its laws or the reasoning behind them; it means that our libraries and digital repositories are filled with documents of limited use; and it means that the public can't easily digest the information it needs to make important decisions about the future of its government.

To get a sense of how this plays out in real life, let's look at the first page of three committee reports from various points in history.

Figure 1 is a committee report from 1861 created with hand-set type a few months after GPO began its life.

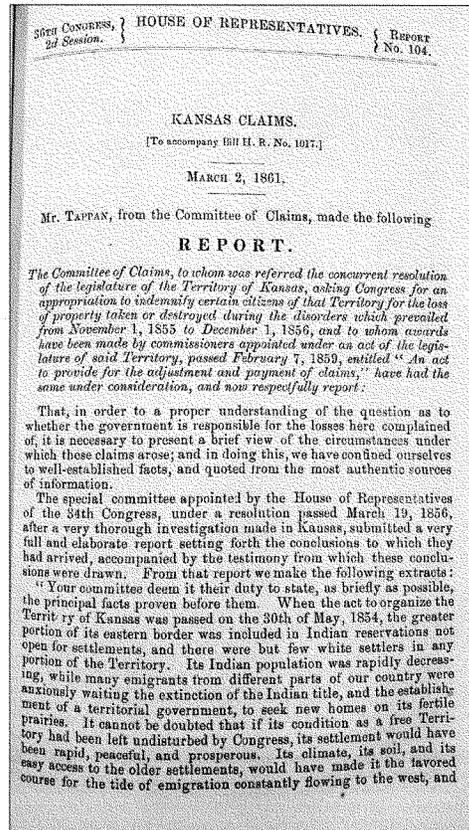


Figure 1. House committee report from 1861.

Figure 2 is a report from 1936 and is set with hot lead type. And the report depicted in figure 3 was reported from this committee in November and represents the output from GPO's current digital typesetting system.

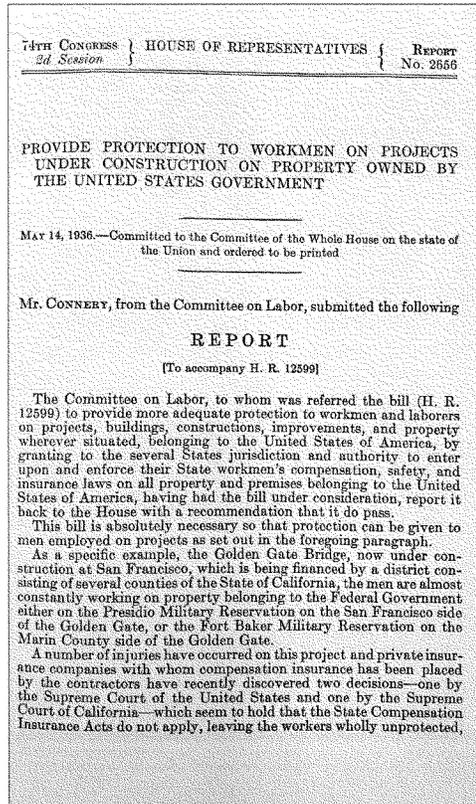


Figure 2. House committee report from 1936.

All 3 look pretty similar: (1) They use small type sizes and tight line spacing; (2) they are devoid of all but the most basic graphics; and (3) they are designed for economy of printing, not for readability or accessibility.



116TH CONGRESS <i>1st Session</i>	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	REPT. 116-286 Part 1
SMITHSONIAN WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM ACT		
NOVEMBER 13, 2019.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed		
Ms. LOFGREN, from the Committee on House Administration, submitted the following		
R E P O R T		
together with		
ADDITIONAL VIEWS		
[To accompany H.R. 1980]		
[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]		
The Committee on House Administration, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1980) to establish in the Smithsonian Institution a comprehensive women's history museum, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.		
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Figure 3. House committee report from 2019.

Compare that with a similar kind of document from the U.K. House of Commons (figure 4): It prints on standard-size paper, uses commercially available typefaces and even color, and is equally readable on paper, on a screen, or on a phone.

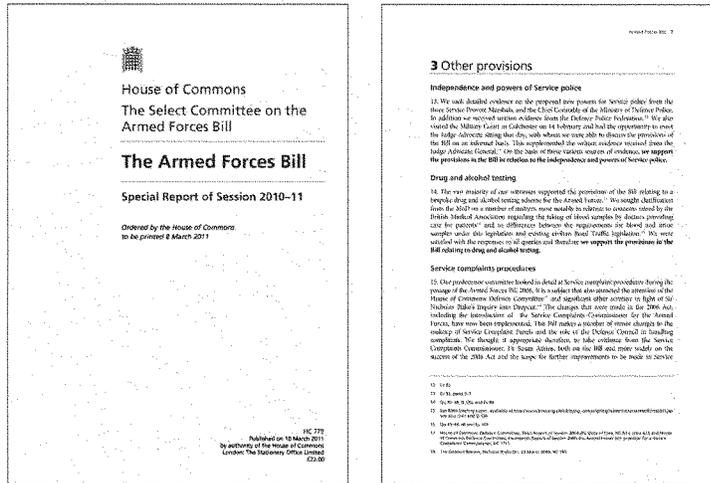


Figure 4. U.K. House of Commons report.

I believe that reexamining the look and feel of Congress' documents makes sense now that we have the technology to make differences that matter. We can make those documents readable and accessible whether on a computer screen, a phone, or on paper.

We also need to make those documents easier to produce so that a committee counsel can put her effort into preparing the content and not the formatting.

If Congress is willing to partner with us to make these important changes, the end result will be documents that are easier to author, to produce, and to consume. That accrues to everyone's benefit: Congress, GPO, and the public.



I stand ready to work with all of you should Congress want to explore how we might enhance the readability and accessibility of important congressional documents.

I am also committed to ensuring that GPO delivers for all of its customers and continues its record of positive financial performance.

Madam Chairperson, Mr. Davis, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you, Mr. Director.
Mr. Leary.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL P. LEARY

Mr. LEARY. Madam Chair, thank you, first of all, for your kind words of introduction. I would have to say, based on your opening remarks, demonstrating the maxim that “it is not where you stand; it is where you sit,” I might have taken issue with Congressman Gurley’s remarks in my prior career as a Marine and preferred the weapons and the ships. However, today, I will accept the printed material.

Good morning, Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, along with Director Halpern and Superintendent Hall.

Before beginning my oral remarks, I would like to introduce my leadership team, who, like me, are fully committed to providing valued service to both the GPO and the OIG. They are my acting deputy inspector general, Tony Baptiste, who is on loan to me from the Commodity Futures Trading Commission—and many thanks to their inspector general, Roy Lavik, for that; also, Freddie Hall, the assistant inspector general for audits; Mr. Al Evora, who is the assistant inspector general for investigations; and Mr. Nathan Deahl, who is my assistant director general for inspections.

Last year, I focused on change, whether it was reorganizing our office, reworking our products, publishing a new 5-year strategy, revising the agency’s management challenges, or establishing a new law enforcement program. We have comprehensively overhauled the way we do business at the Office of Inspector General and what we focus on. Much of this was only made possible with Congress’ support and the agency’s cooperation.

We have already published one audit this year with an inspection report soon to follow that responds to congressional and agency priorities. This is just a start. With continued congressional support and agency cooperation, more than half a dozen more audits and inspections will be published before the end of the fiscal year, all directly supporting agency and congressional priorities. Production will also come in the form of outreach and education. We have begun an effort to deliver a standardized class to all agency employees and as many contractors as possible to describe the function of the inspector general and the individual employee’s role in helping us.

Similarly, we are providing classes on how to detect and prevent fraud across any part of the Government Publishing Office that interacts with finance and services. For the first time, my office will also visit and evaluate all 16 remote GPO sites, and it will happen this year.

Today is the second time I have testified before Congress since my appointment 10 months ago. During that time, I have also met on more than a dozen occasions with staff from GPO House and Senate Oversight Committees and Senate Appropriations. I take very seriously my responsibility to keep Congress as fully informed as possible to enable their oversight function. Within the framework of an independent inspector general office, I endeavor to ad-

dress all of your and your staff's questions and concerns as equally and as fully as I can.

I thank you, again, for the chance to address you this morning and for supporting the work of my office. I look forward to answering any questions that you all might have.

[The statement of Mr. Leary follows:]

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
MICHAEL P. LEARY
INSPECTOR GENERAL
GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

Before the Committee on House Administration
Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Good morning, Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today along with Director Halpern and Superintendent Hall.

Since my appointment last April, my staff and I have focused on comprehensively re-orienting and re-structuring our office to provide a positive strategic impact to GPO across all of our areas of effort: Audits, Investigations, and now Inspections. I am pleased to report that, with the help of Congress and the cooperation of the GPO, we have made significant progress.

When I arrived, the office was understaffed at about 50 percent; a level it seemed to struggle to maintain, let alone exceed. After many months of effort, we are finally turning the corner with eight new hires either having joined or in the process of joining my office. We still have much to do to fill the remaining vacancies with the best professionals in the IG Community, but I am optimistic I can make my office a destination of choice because of our focus on quality and impactful work.

In order to offer more proactive and transparent service to GPO, I reorganized my office to add an Inspections Division. It is already paying dividends – their first of several products will be released in the next weeks. I have imposed a dramatic and needed re-focusing of our investigations effort by closing many long standing and unproductive cases, insisting on the development of a task force mentality, and hiring new leadership to keep the division on the right path. Our Audits Division has been directed to emphasize contracting, acquisitions and budget topics, and they published their first audit report since my arrival last month on the agency's Purchase Cards Program.

I also used the occasion of my first Semi-Annual Report to Congress (SARC) and Annual Work Plan, as well as a new Five Year Strategy for my office to completely rework our Agency Management Challenges, overhaul the open Recommendations Program, and revise and remap our office goals to the GPO's strategic goals for the near to mid-term.

In addition to the confirmation of Director Halpern, the passage of the Legislative Branch Inspector General Independence Act of 2019 (Leg. Branch IG Act) was a major accomplishment of this Committee and the Senate Rules Committee for which I am grateful. We worked diligently with committee staff and their work should not go unrecognized. I think it is important to also recognize that passage of this act is just a step in the right direction. Determining just how to ensure the independence so necessary for an IG to be effective is an ongoing and multi-faceted challenge. As

the Inspector General of GPO, this also includes the unique nature of being IG for a legislative branch agency.

That was 2019.

2020 will be a year of *production* for the GPO OIG.

In addition to the already mentioned Purchase Cards Program audit, we will shortly release an inspection report on the Next Generation Passport Program. We are also preparing to release to agency leadership a number of shorter products designed to offer insight into our thinking on various subjects of interest, such as contingent liability, overtime rates, and leave without pay. In the coming year there will be multiple major products coming out of the Inspections and Audits Divisions, both as detailed in our Annual Work Plan and in response to emerging issues and requests.

We will augment the production of our divisions with contract support to provide responsiveness and expertise. I currently have numerous contract proposals working their way through the GPO and Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) approval processes to address the recent Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) website defacement, human capital, customer service, and implementation of new law enforcement authority.

I've also asked the JCP to request GAO revisit two reports it issued 15 years ago addressing GPO's transition to the digital age and needed human capital reforms. In addition to continuing to meet frequently with staff of the various committees with GPO equities, and in order to increase my office's transparency with its stakeholders, I am developing a monthly update to disseminate among the various oversight committees, including Appropriations and GPO leadership. This monthly update will enhance their insight of my office's work without either compromising or creating the appearance of compromising my independence.

For perhaps the first time, and by the end of this calendar year, teams from my office will also be conducting site visits for *all* 16 GPO remote sites around the country to both introduce our work and to evaluate the individual office\facility. Once completed, we will also review the remote site program as a whole.

Within the next nine months, we will aggressively market and present to the entire 1,800 GPO workforce an "IG 101" describing our mission, products and the value of working with and in support of our office. Simultaneously, we will be conducting targeted Fraud Detection and Prevention training to all GPO employees who have any level of interaction with money, services, vendors and products. These efforts will plant the seeds for future cooperation and production.

On the Investigations side, in addition to implementing the law enforcement program requirements associated with the Legislative IG Independence Act of 2019, in order to allow for greater focus of limited resources, I reduced our backlog of open cases from 50 to 17. New investigations initiated by my office must have a strategic emphasis that can assist in rooting out fraud, waste, and abuse at GPO. Therefore, I have directed my AIG/I to develop a "Task Force" investigation to be conducted this year. We will also continue to address potential criminal matters as they arise, such as a GPO-OIG initiated multi-agency contract fraud case in Florida. We anticipate that next month the case will culminate with a guilty plea.

I thank you again for the chance to address you this morning and supporting the work of my office. I look forward to any questions you might have.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you very much.
And now we will turn to our last witness, Ms. Hall.

STATEMENT OF LAURIE HALL

Ms. HALL. Thank you, Madam Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, Members of the Committee, thanks for inviting me to this meeting this morning. And I am happy to talk to you about the Federal Depository Library Program.

Currently I serve as the superintendent of documents and the managing director of Library Services and Content Management. And I have been at GPO for many years, as you heard. I have a very dedicated staff of 87 information professionals that help us man, work, and organize those four statutorily mandated programs. Today I am only going to focus on the Federal Depository Library Program.

We implement strategic programs and operation in partnerships with our 1,122 nationwide Federal depository libraries in collaboration with our colleagues at GPO, other agency publishers, and the national libraries. The right to public access and the workings of their government has been around even before GPO. It dates back to about 1813. So, in those 207 years, the program has continually evolved to meet the needs of the public and the needs of the library that offer this information. And in the last several years, that evolution has increased exponentially as we have shifted our focus to our libraries having greater flexibility to meet their community needs in the digital age.

You know, as we meet and work and visit our libraries throughout the country, we find many of them are facing major budget cuts, decreased staffing, and significant space issues. In some cases, academic institutions are merging campuses, rethinking their degree programs, and some have even shut their doors.

Other libraries are building new facilities and offering new services to their communities. And in some cases, these libraries are rethinking their role as a Federal depository library. They tell us they need more flexibility in managing collections in order to remain a member of the FDLP. They tell us they need more services from the GPO to help identify, find, and collect digital information while still requiring certain products in tangible format. Many of these libraries have large historic print collections and are looking for GPO to assist in the projects that preserve these national assets while helping them to mitigate space and storage.

To meet these needs, we are implementing many new programs, tools, and services. In most cases, we do this through collaboration and partnership with our libraries, national libraries, the Library of Congress, and Federal agencies. These relationships save time, staff resources, avoid duplication of effort and do save money.

Currently, LSCM collaborates with over 30 organizations. I want to give you a few ideas of some of the things that we have accomplished recently. Our libraries want everything in their collections to be accessible and identifiable. In 2019, we cataloged over 25,000 new resources, and we have over a million records in our catalog of U.S. Government publications. In our Federal web archive, we have over 23.5 terabytes of data, and we have crawled over, yes, 2 million URLs that we have harvested as well.

And everybody wants more digitalized content. We have been working to do this, and through our recent digitization efforts with a couple different organizations, we have enhanced the scope of collections on govinfo.gov. We have done the entire—with the Office of the Federal Register, we have digitized the entire collection of the public papers, the Federal Register, and the U.S. Government Manual. We have digitized over 1,300 historic hearings, dating back to 1958. And we have 10,000 more hearings being prepped for digitization as we speak.

We also started a preservation steward program. We currently have 42 libraries that are preserving collections of tangible materials and providing services to those libraries to support that effort. We are also establishing some pilot projects to provide services to libraries for cataloging, inventory, preservation and condition assessment. And we hope to launch our first pilot in fiscal year 2020. We also work with our regional libraries. And our regional libraries have very big collections and they serve a very different role from our selectives. They are mentors, coordinators, and work with the libraries in their State. They want to do more and have more flexibility for Regional Discard. We have new models of shared collections and new technology to help them manage those very, very vast collections.

We also do a lot to promote government information. We partnered recently with Census Bureau to send out tons of information to those libraries to promote the 2020 Census. So we have been doing all this within the current confines of title 44. Recent efforts to revise title 44 are welcomed by GPO and our depository library community. And I think there are very specific sections of title 44 that could help us better manage the program and provide those libraries with the needed flexibility, especially as it relates to digital collections. And we would be happy to work with the Committee and their staff on some of these potential revisions.

So one of our key mottos is we want government information where and when it is needed. And we think the FDLP embodies this sentiment, and we are very proud to serve that need. We work with our libraries to build what we call the comprehensive national collection of U.S. Government information, and this work impacts researchers, students, legal and business communities, the public, and all who seek U.S. Government information in person, in our libraries, and through online access.

So thank you very much for allowing me to tell you a little bit about what we do. And I am happy to respond to any questions that you have.

[The statement of Ms. Hall follows:]

Prepared Statement of Laurie B. Hall
Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Publishing Office
Before the Committee on House Administration
Hearing on Oversight of the Government Publishing Office
March 3, 2020

Madam Chairperson Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, & Members of the Committee on House Administration, thank you for the invitation to speak to you this morning about the Federal Depository Library Program.

My name is Laurie Hall, and I serve as the Superintendent of Documents and the Managing Director of the Library Services & Content Management business unit at GPO. I have worked in support of the FDLP since joining GPO many years ago, and I currently oversee a very dedicated staff of 87 information professionals that help GPO administer four statutorily-mandated programs:

- The Federal Depository Library Program, otherwise known as the FDLP;
- The Cataloging & Indexing Program;
- The International Exchange Service (in collaboration with the Library of Congress);
- And the By-Law Distribution Program.

The Superintendent of Documents organization implements strategic programs and operations in partnership with 1,120 nationwide Federal depository libraries and in collaboration with colleagues at GPO, with other agency publishers, and national libraries.

The FDLP supports the public's right to access the information and workings of their Government and has legislative roots that date back to 1813. In those 207 years, the program has continually evolved to meet the needs of the public and the needs of the libraries that offer this information. In the last several years, that evolution has increased exponentially as we have shifted our focus to offer our libraries greater flexibility to meet the community needs in the digital age.

As we meet, work, and visit with our libraries, we find that many of them are facing major budget cuts, decreased staffing, and have significant space issues. In some cases, academic institutions are merging campuses, rethinking their degree program offerings, and some have even shut their doors. Other libraries are building new facilities and offering new services to their communities. And in some cases, these libraries are rethinking their role as a Federal depository library.

They tell us that they need more flexibility in managing collections in order to remain a member of the FDLP. They tell us they need more services from GPO to help identify, find, and collect digital Government information, while still requiring certain products in tangible format. Many libraries that have large, historic print collections are looking to GPO to assist in projects that preserve these national assets while helping to mitigate space and storage issues.

To meet these needs, we are implementing new programs, tools, and services. In most cases, we do this through partnerships and collaborations with our libraries, national libraries, the Library of Congress, and Federal agencies. These relationships save time, staff resources, avoid duplication of effort, and save money. Currently, LSCM collaborates with over 30 organizations. Here are some of our recent accomplishments.

1. **More Cataloging and Web Harvesting:** Our libraries want all of the materials they have in their vast collections to be cataloged and new digital information found and accessible. In FY2019, we cataloged close to 25,000 new resources. Our online Catalog of U.S. Government Publications has almost 1 million records identifying U.S. Government publications in all formats. And our FDLP Web Archive now has over 23.5 TB of data with over 200,000,000 (200 million) Government URLs crawled and harvested.
2. **More Digital Content:** Everyone wants more digitized historic content. And we have been working to do just that. Through digitization efforts, GPO continues to enhance the scope of collections available on [govinfo.gov](https://www.govinfo.gov).
 - Three, recent, joint digitization efforts with the Office of the Federal Register have resulted in the digital accessibility of complete collections of the Public Papers of the Presidents from 1929; the Federal Register from 1936; and the U.S. Government Manual.
 - Together with partner libraries, more than 1,300 historic Congressional Hearings dating back to 1958 have been digitized, and nearly 10,000 hearings being prepped for digitization.
3. **Preserving Historic Tangible Collections:** To help ensure the preservation of historic documents in collections across the country, we developed a Preservation Steward program. Currently, 42 libraries are preserving collections of tangible material and we are providing services to those libraries to support this effort. LSCM is also establishing a pilot program for providing services to libraries for cataloging, inventory, preservation, and condition assessment. We hope to launch our first pilot in FY 2020.
4. **Regional Libraries Flexibility:** We have also been developing greater flexibility for our regional libraries. Regional libraries have vast historic collections of Government documents; they serve as coordinators, mentors, and advisors for selective libraries; and they champion access, reference, and research services for U.S. Government publications. To help them accomplish all this, we have offered new services such as regional discard, new models for shared collections, and new technology to help manage collections.
5. **Promoting Government Information:** And daily, we work with our libraries to promote Government information by utilizing social media, partnering with agency content providers, and creating and distributing promotional and educational materials. We worked closely with the Census Bureau to provide 2020 Census promotional materials to our libraries (over 250,000 copies of flyers, posters, etc.), to help our libraries answer questions about Census 2020.

LSCM has been making all these things happen while working within the current framework of Title 44. Recent efforts to revise Title 44 are welcome by both GPO and our depository library community. I believe that there are specific sections of Title 44 that if revised, could help GPO better administer the program and provide the libraries with additional flexibility, especially as it relates to digital collections and services. I will be glad to work with the Committee members and staff on potential revisions.

In closing, providing public access to U.S. Government information where and when it is needed is our motto. The FDLP embodies that sentiment, and my team at GPO, in partnership with our

nationwide libraries, is proud to serve that need. We work together to help build and maintain a comprehensive National Collection of U.S. Government Information. This work impacts researchers, students, the legal and business communities, the public, and all who seek U.S. Government information in person in Federal depository libraries or through online access.

Madam Chairperson, and members of the Committee, this concludes my remarks, and I will be happy to respond to any questions you have.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you very much.

Ms. HALL. You are welcome.

The CHAIRPERSON. And thanks to each one of our witnesses for your testimony.

Now is the time when members have an opportunity to ask questions under the 5-minute rule. I would turn first to the Ranking Member for questions that he may have for the witnesses.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Thank you, again, Madam Chair.

And thank you to the witnesses. I enjoyed your testimony. It is great to see you all.

I will start just down at this end. Mr. Leary, what level of independence does your office have as an inspector general.

Mr. LEARY. Thank you for the question, Congressman. I appreciate it. I think it is pretty good, and it is improving. We just passed in the Congress this year, this past year, the Legislative IG Independence Act, which incorporated provisions for hiring, budget independence, as well as protections for my position that were consistent with the IG Act that applies, generally speaking, to the executive branch.

It is an iterative process. Mr. Halpern and I have already had discussions since the passage of that Act about how to implement provisions that ensure that my office can work with the independence it needs to be effective. It is a critical component of the concept behind an inspector general.

I also work very closely with—as I mentioned in my written testimony as well as my oral remarks—with Congress and with the JCP in particular. I know that the JCP exercises a management function as well as an oversight function. So that is an educational process for me, as well as I think in my interactions with congressional staff, is to make sure that there is recognition of when that management touches upon the independence of my office. And I think it has been working fairly well. We have good communications.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Building on what you just talked about with JCP and others, what is your view of congressional oversight, and what do you see as your office's responsibilities to the entire Congress?

Mr. LEARY. That is a great question. And one of the things that I have been thinking about a lot is the difference between management and oversight. And take it for what it is worth; it is just my definition. But management involves the process of engaging in decision making and the execution of decision making. Oversight is accountability for those decisions. There is a pretty big distinction there.

So one of the things that we have honored about IGs is that they should only be generally managed. That is the way of ensuring their independence. So if we are going to do that, it has to happen both on the executive branch side—we are pretty clear—you know, there is an example, if we learned that the White House or anybody else, the Secretary or the Department wanted to get involved in how an office of an IG was managed, the Congress would be outraged, and say: Well, wait a second; you are interfering with the independence of that office.

That same principal applies across the board. So that is the distinction I am trying to make sure is understood.

Oversight is critical. Holding people accountable for the management of their functions, their agencies, that is what Congress can only do, and others cannot. And I dedicate my office to supporting that effort.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Thank you, Mr. Leary.

It was great to meet you during my last tour of GPO. And thank you for your service to this country.

Mr. LEARY. Please, we all serve, Congressman. Thank you.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Halpern, welcome to the other side of the table. As you were sitting on the other side at the Rules Committee when we were offering amendments for years, I have been waiting for this day. Do you remember the transportation amendment that you didn't rule in order five-and-a-half years ago?

Mr. HALPERN. I think we have got a long list of your amendments that—

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I think we do. And I only have a limited amount of time. So I will stick with the GPO. But welcome, sir. We are very optimistic about your leadership at the GPO and excited to have you here today.

What are your thoughts on how to improve the way GPO supports congressional documents?

Mr. HALPERN. So that is a great question. It goes to a little bit of what I was talking about this morning.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. You specifically said—I don't have a lot of time—to talk about any ideas about any software program upgrades that can make GPO more user-friendly, especially when it comes to the legislative branch.

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely. So one of the roles that I had for the committees that I serve was usually in the arena of document production. So I knew firsthand just how hard it is for committee staff and committee professionals to deal with GPO. And, frankly, the difficulty of that task often gets in the way of developing good content; of putting the information you want into that committee report. We have got to make that process easier. So, when you as Members and your staff are trying to put together, whether it is a committee hearing or a committee report, we need to meet you where you are today. And that, in 99 percent of the cases, is in Microsoft Word. We need to make it so that you can work in that application that you are using natively and make it so that you can focus on that content, and we can worry about how that gets formatted, how that gets printed, and how it gets displayed on the web and every place else.

And so one of the things as we bring our new XPub comprehensive engine online, we are really designing with that idea in mind. So that, yes, leg counsel at some of the other offices, the clerk's office, they may use a specialized editor. But when we come to committees and you are producing a hearing or you are producing a report, my philosophy is we need to meet you where you are today.

And so, as we develop the system, I think there are some real opportunities for us to do some development on that side. And as we move forward, as I was talking about, if Congress is willing, we can also revisit the way these documents look to make them more

flexible, easier to format, and easier to display in the whole variety of media.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON. Very good.

The gentlelady from California is right here.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you all for being here.

I wanted to go to a local issue in the San Diego community. And I thought perhaps you would know that San Diego downtown library is going to be giving up their Federal Document Depository status—actually after 137 years—probably, like a lot of decisions that are made, to free up space since 85 to 90 percent of those materials are digitized and available online. Apparently, it wasn't without controversy. Honestly, I have to say I wasn't following the issue, but I think they did, and they felt it was the best way that they could respond to the way the public is really using their library.

But in light of that decision of San Diego and I am sure others, I know that, Superintendent Hall, you spoke to this a little bit in terms of how we can really see the future of the Federal Depository Library Programs. And what are the incentives for them not moving forward with that decision? And what can we do if more libraries decide to go that direction?

Ms. HALL. Thanks. That is a really good question. Actually, I have a report back from San Diego. I had staff go out there. They were out visiting yesterday. We have been talking to that library since probably before Thanksgiving. We have a lot of options for the libraries of that size. They had 1.6 million documents, and they have been in the program since like 1895. So they originally wanted to get rid of everything. I think we have convinced them now that that is probably not a good option. There may be some very historic and important documents in that collection that need to stay in that institution or go to other institutions in the State of California. And I think they are—as of yesterday the report is they are rethinking staying in the program in a different capacity. We can offer that library, like we offer a lot of our libraries, to be mostly digital or predominantly digital where they rely predominantly on what we have on govinfo. And then they can select some tangible materials if they want to. And we are in the process now of helping them go through that 1.6 million and decide how to move that material around to the California digital—

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Do you think that perhaps the underutilization, is there a different role for outreach for the libraries or, even just the world that we live in right now, that people are not pressed to really access those?

Ms. HALL. Well, I think that there is a combination of things. It takes a lot of interest at the library and the library staff themselves. We have other public libraries that are very similar situations that have incredible marketing and promotional things going on to promote the government information that they have. Sometimes we just have to get people in that position to really want to highlight what is in those collections. Because there are some really, really interesting things in those collections.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. All right. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Ms. HALL. You are welcome.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Director Halpern, I wanted to mention that one of my constituents asked why the GPO doesn't produce a Congressional Directory until about three-quarters of the way through Congress when it would be more useful to have it sooner. Is it supposed to be produced during the first session of each congressional session, and what is the problem? What should it be?

Mr. HALPERN. So I can get back to you exactly on the timing of those products. I do know that some of those products we rely on, we rely on Congress, our customer, to tell us when they are ready to print. So, for instance, the pictorial directory wasn't ready until just very recently. And that is because we have been working with the Committee on House Administration to prepare that document and make sure that is ready for print.

Similarly, the full-blown Congressional Directory, I believe we worked with Congress and some of the other entities inside the GPO producing that document. There is sometimes a lot of different factors that go into the production schedule of these documents, including time we have got on presses for other more important documents or more time-critical documents. That said, I can get back to you with an answer on that.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. All right. Great, and I will get back to my constituents. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRPERSON. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Halpern, it is good to see you again. And I am still getting used to seeing you on that side. And I don't have the same issues that my colleague over here has. You approved all of my amendments—maybe it is the quality of the amendment that was the issue.

Mr. HALPERN. I will leave that to you, sir.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. So anyhow. You mentioned earlier as—it is has been mentioned several times—in your career, we all know what you have done here in the House. Tell us about your experience that contributed to your current position now.

Mr. HALPERN. So I am the first head of GPO who was also a customer. And, you know, up until when the name of the agency changed, the head of the agency was required to have a background in printing and graphic design and those things. And that requirement went away when they changed the name of the agency. And so I represent the very first person who has really been a practitioner, who has been someone who has utilized GPO's services on a regular basis. And as a customer, I have got to say, over the years, GPO has pulled many, many rabbits out of their hat and really done the work at all hours of the day to make sure that Congress could do its work. That said, I have also had many interactions with GPO that have—I think the polite way to put it have been less than satisfying. And so what I am trying to do is bring a customer perspective to all of the work that we do at GPO.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. I appreciate that. As a former business owner, that is very important. And you mentioned the less than satisfying, we experienced that in previous hearings that we have had in previous Congresses with grave concern over GPO. During that time,

GPO lost several executive branch customers. What are some of the ideas or things that you can do to remain competitive?

Mr. HALPERN. Well, the good news is we are trying to earn back as many of those customers as we can. And one success story is the economic report of the President, which had—the White House had decided to go elsewhere to print that document for six or seven years. They came back very recently. And that is a real success story.

My belief, and the Chairperson alluded to it in her opening statement, GPO is different than any other agency because we operate as a business. Only about 13 percent of our total funds are appropriated, and even those really are just payments for services. So, for instance, the appropriation for congressional printing is just an accounting mechanism for Congress to deal with services we provide Congress on a daily basis.

I tell my staff every single day: We have to earn every single dollar that we get. And we do that by providing the most value that we can for our Federal customers. That is not always the cheapest price.

So one good example that I learned about early in my tenure were FBI fingerprint cards. That is something that is going digital. But there are still a number of jurisdictions that use the old-fashioned fingerprint cards.

The FBI went to another vendor to produce those cards, but they—roughly around 20 percent of those cards were not usable because they weren't up to spec. We were able, at a slightly higher price per card, were able to produce cards that they could use virtually all of them.

So it is that kind of value proposition that we are trying to bring to everything we do.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. So one of the things that you said in your testimony that really hit home with me is simplifying our language for committee reports. This is something that I work with my communications staff to remove the D.C. talk, I mean, things like cosponsorship, sign-on, markups. These are things that the general public doesn't understand. What remedies do you have for these issues?

Mr. HALPERN. So I am going to sort of put on both hats here for a moment because, for better or for worse, I have probably drafted myself hundreds of committee reports over my career here.

There are certain parts of those documents that have magic words, and we are not going to change that because those words do things. But I believe that there are large parts of those documents that you can tell a more persuasive story. That is how I always tried to do it in the reports I wrote for bills I managed for the Members I served. But the problem that we have got with our systems is that they don't encourage that kind of ease with writing. It is hard to take that story that you produced for your web page or for your committee memo and move that into that report document. We need to make that simpler. And I think if we make those tools simpler, people can spend more time actually thinking about the content of what is in those documents, and that is the important message that we have got to get across.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. It is a challenge.

And I see the red light is on. So, Madam Chair, I yield back the time I no longer have.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you. The gentelady from Ohio is recognized.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

And thank you all for being here today.

Mr. Halpern, have you had an opportunity to meet with all of the labor representatives? I know there are probably 12 or 13 labor unions. Have you met with them all?

Mr. HALPERN. We have 11 separate bargaining units. I have met with them all together. We have two units without contracts, our electricians and our FOP, and I met with them to hear their concerns.

Ms. BRADY. So how long do you think it is going to take to come to a contract agreement?

Mr. HALPERN. I am hopeful that we will be able to do that as quickly as we can. I can tell you, just yesterday, I met with my staff again and directed them to go back and figure out viable counteroffers for both of our unions with outstanding contracts. So I hope to turn that around relatively soon.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you. Can you give me an update on what your office is doing to support the 2020 Census?

Mr. HALPERN. Sure. So I am actually going to direct this a little bit back to Superintendent Hall because she is doing some of the work, and her folks are doing some of the work to get the message out about the Census. We are administering the contract for the Department of Commerce for all of the printed materials for the Census. I can tell you that that our contractor RR Donnelly is proceeding apace. Everything seems to be on schedule. And, you know, after kind of a rocky start with that particular contract, the Department of Commerce—

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Halpern, I don't mean to cut you off. We—go ahead.

Ms. HALL. Thank you. There are two parts that I am kind of responsible for. I think it was mentioned the agency Distribution Service. So, once the material is printed by our printing contractors, then we also have that sensitive material in two of our warehouse facilities: one in Laurel, Maryland and one in Pueblo, Colorado. So under contract and then we disseminate that as the Census wants us to to the various regions. So it is their promotional materials that they send out to their offices. So that is one part.

And then the other part, I think, I mentioned, we worked with Census Bureau to get that information out to our depository library: flyers, posters, promotional material for people that walk into those libraries, know what the responsibility is, and how to fill out the Census and what some of the issues are.

Ms. FUDGE. So you believe you have all the resources that you need to ensure that we can have an accurate census?

Ms. HALL. Right, right.

Ms. FUDGE. The last question to you, Mr. Halpern, how did you find morale in your office?

Mr. HALPERN. I was actually pleasantly surprised. You know, GPO—one of the things I can report from my 3 months on the job is how welcoming everybody has been. And I have had numerous

folks come up and express their happiness that there is now permanent leadership. There are obviously lots of issues we have got to address, and we are collating those and working through them as we can.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you.

Mr. Leary.

Mr. LEARY. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. FUDGE. In your office's last semiannual report, you identified a need for GPO to attract and develop a workforce for the future. What did you mean by that, and how do you think that should happen?

Mr. LEARY. Thank you for the question, Congresswoman.

Basically, in line with GPO's intent to transform to the digital age, we are going to have to restructure and reform a workforce that has those competencies. This is not a new effort. It goes back as far as—and one of the things your question gives me the opportunity to do is point out a GAO study that was done 15 years ago about GPO's transformation to the digital age. And there is a separate study done by GAO about the workforce that would be necessary to accomplish that. I have asked and I think it would be appropriate for GAO to review these two reports. And how does it work? Was it successful?

I don't think there is some magic formula for this answer. It has been looked at for quite a while. We do have to have a focus on who has the skills for a digital publishing world. And, obviously, we talked about how old the GPO is: 159 years old. The building across the street, you probably see it from here, it looks like it is 159 years old. And all of it screams for modernization, workforce and everything else. I think the Director is well aware of this, and I am not saying anything new. We just have to keep focusing on it.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you. The gentleman from California is recognized.

Mr. AGUILAR. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Director Halpern and Superintendent Hall, Director, some of your testimony obviously talked about the type of modernization, digitization, I wanted to talk a little bit more down that line from an accessibility perspective. When will all the documents be available in digital format? And can you talk a little about the process on how that will work?

Mr. HALPERN. Sure. So I can break this into two parts. And for historic documents, Superintendent Hall is better versed in that than I am, as it is her group that is going back through the last 150 years to try to digitize those documents.

What we are trying to do, both for our more recent documents and then going forward, we are trying to build a framework that makes digital availability a lot easier than what it is now. So I alluded earlier to our current generation digital typesetting system. That system was designed to produce print and in the very early 1980s, and it is still in use today. What we have done in the meantime as the internet has grown and there has been a need for digital documents, we have bolted on a series of additions to try and get digital formats available for folks. XPub, our new generation

composition engine, really will have documents that are born digital. And as far as XPub is concerned, it doesn't care about what the output looks like. It can provide output in machine-readable format, for screens, for phones, or in a format that looks good for print. The problem that we have got is sort of the transition between what we have currently and what we have in the future. And that is much of the work we are doing now. And I will turn it over to Laurie on the historic documents.

Ms. HALL. Thank you for the question. There are three ways we are getting collections into govinfo.gov. So. With the GPO access legislation, we have got 93 going forward. So we are working with our libraries to bring in collections of materials. We brought in, for instance, a huge collection of digitized material from Florida on the Panama Canal Commission. We also are doing collaborations with the Library of Congress for some major, major groups of documents. We have an agreement now with the Serial Set. We are going to go back to the very beginning and digitize the Serial Set. They are doing the digitization. And we get it; we prepare the metadata and ingest it into gov.info.

And we are also working with agencies. You heard the Office of the Federal Register. We are picking up full runs of key legislative documents and key documents. And we are also doing some smaller stuff at Interior and U.S. Geological Survey. So there are so many documents out there to do. So we have to have some kind of priorities, but we are working through as much as we can.

Mr. AGUILAR. Director, can you talk to me a little bit about how people process information? I mean, right now, the audio book piece is kind of booming. I could click on an NPR article and get that article read back to me in four minutes—or my morning news. Do you see in the future reports and longer form pieces that there could be audio versions. And can you also touch on kind of a disability-friendly perspective of the look of the website moving forward?

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely. And Laurie can chime in here a little bit as well, or we can provide you with more information. I know we worked very hard to make gov.info 508 and accessibility compatible as much as we can with the data we have. Again, as we bring xPub online, and that is the engine that is generating, for instance, congressional documents, that will enable us to do a lot more on the accessibility side and provide additional services because its native format is really going to be USLM, U.S. legislative markup language, which is a machine-readable format and is an extension of the current XML formats used by the House and the Senate.

When we are working in that kind of native format, that enables us, again, to add on lots of other services. And you sort of couple that with some of the other services out there. You can have not necessarily an audio book read by a human, but you can also take that machine-readable format and have very good human, human-like speech generated by a computer that can read those documents. Word actually provides that capability now. And the more data we get in a standardized, machine-readable format the easier those kind of services are.

Mr. AGUILAR. Thank you, so much.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson, I yield back.

The CHAIRPERSON. I just have a few remaining questions. First—not today—but could you provide us with a short update on the NextGen Passport program, not here at this moment, like a page subsequent to the hearing? I am interested.

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely.

The CHAIRPERSON. Also, I am interested in getting a brief update on what efforts the agency is taking in the wake of the defacement of the FDLP, the cyber attack in January and what we are looking at for cyber—not here at this moment—

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely.

The CHAIRPERSON [continuing]. But subsequent to this.

Just a couple of questions. I was interested in your idea on accommodating the Microsoft Word that we are using here, but it raises the question of, how do you accommodate without promoting? For example, I mean, we use Word in my office, but a lot of lawyers still use Word Perfect because it actually works very well for footnotes and other things. So is there a way to accommodate without mandating?

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely. Again, this sort of goes back to my general philosophy where we meet our customers where they are. Let me use the example of how we draft legislative language in this institution currently. So, in the late 1990s, early 2000s, we started to transition to an XML-drafting format. Well, that required a brand new editor that the folks needed to learn. And now we are at the stage where that editor is at the end of its life. And we are working with leg counsel and others to develop the next generation of that product.

But if we get into the business working with our customers and, again, sort of meeting them wherever they are most comfortable, for most folks, that is in the Microsoft suite of products. You know, in 10 or 20 years, it could be the Google suite or something else.

The CHAIRPERSON. Who knows.

Mr. HALPERN. What we need to do is figure out how we develop templates and other kinds of services so that our end users are comfortable wherever they are.

The CHAIRPERSON. They are driving it rather than you.

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely. And we can take that information and ingest that and then make sure it gets on gov.info, makes sure it gets onto paper, and all of the other things in between.

The CHAIRPERSON. Very good.

You know, one of the questions I have had for a long time—I am very big on digitizing material. It makes it more accessible, but there are really two issues. One, I think about the recordings a century ago, and they were done on a little piece of wire. And the question is, how do you read that wire later? A hundred years from now, God willing, we will have all of this digital information, and we better be sure that we have the programs that allow us to assess that information. So it seems to me that the programs really need to be attached to the documents in some way so that, down the line, this will continue to be accessible. Can any of you address that?

Mr. HALPERN. I can give it a shot and Laurie probably can make me sound smarter. One of the huge benefits of shifting to a ma-

chine-readable format is, at its heart it is text. It is basically the most basic format we have, with tags. So, as long as you have sort of a Rosetta Stone that says, "This is what these tags mean," I think that serves you for a very, very long time into the future for being able to read that. It is really at the least common denominator stage.

We also, I know, work very closely with our friends at NARA, with the Archivist, to make sure that our output formats are in formats that they can access and keep.

The CHAIRPERSON. Perhaps we can get a report on that from you, just not a whole library—

Mr. HALPERN [continuing]. Could.

The CHAIRPERSON [continuing]. But just a short report with whatever you know on what other actors are doing because it is something that we do need to pay attention to.

And, finally, on the digitization issue, I was over a few years ago to the Library of Congress looking at their documents. And you can go see documents written in Abraham Lincoln's own hand. So, if that were digitized, we would lose that. There is a difference between information and an artifact. And how do we right now give guidance to librarians and others to make that distinction between what is a historical artifact and what is a piece of information that should just be digitized?

Ms. HALL. Thanks. That is a good question. We have staff now that are preservation librarians and have that particular background. We are doing all kinds of educational things with our libraries to make sure they know the distinction. We are setting up preservation plans with those folks who don't have them, you know, educating them on mitigation strategies for some of those materials that are in that kind of condition. Also we have that Preservation Steward program. So we know people do want to preserve some of the tangible materials. And we are providing all kinds of different services. And we are going to be starting to do some pilot programs specifically to assess condition of the material, because sometimes folks don't know if there is mold or other things, and then mitigation strategies if they are going to keep the tangible materials. So we were working with not only our folks but the folks at the Library of Congress on just those issues.

The CHAIRPERSON. Thank you. You know, each one of you has mentioned title 44, and I am wondering, could we get subsequent to this hearing from each one of you individually some suggestions? I realize that may be unusual because, Director, Ms. Hall works for you, but she has been at GPO for 35 years.

Mr. HALPERN. Absolutely.

The CHAIRPERSON. I think she probably has some insights that none of us would necessarily have and then share them with each other, as well the Committee, and let's see if we can have consensus on what makes sense to move forward on.

And my final question really has to do with what we are doing, Director Halpern, you have an essential role in our legislative process. And I am wondering if you can describe for us in any way that is appropriate in this open setting your plans about keeping your workforce healthy, keeping operations uninterrupted during a public health crisis. As you know, we have a pandemic possibility. We

have just—both the States of California and Oregon have announced that they are moving from containment and mitigation to the mitigation model in response to pandemic. We have nine cases in my county. So we are very concerned. We need to keep government going. What have you done to make sure we can do that?

Mr. HALPERN. Thank you for that. You are absolutely right. We view our mission first and foremost to support Congress' work. And as a result, we focus a lot of continuity of operations. Not just in the case of a pandemic, but in a whole host of different scenarios. We regularly conduct exercises with both the House and the Senate to make sure that all of our systems operate as planned.

I expect to have a plan that I will share with the Committee later this week for our plans for responding to this specific issue. And, frankly, as we started discussing this last week—

The CHAIRPERSON. It would be the same for any type.

Mr. HALPERN. Yeah. We were dusting off old plans. So it is one of those things where we can use a combination of telework and protections in the plan to make sure that we can continue to operate and serve Congress' needs.

The CHAIRPERSON. That is very good. I have no additional questions. I would note that we may have additional questions for each of you. If so, we ask that you respond to them in writing as fast as you reasonably can. And the hearing record will be kept open for those responses, without objection. Thanks to the witnesses and, without objection, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:14 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

