Letter to Debbie Wasserman Schultz, May 22, 2007

Kenneth Hirsh

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May 22, 2007

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Chair, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

By FACSIMILE: 202-226-2052

Dear Madam Chair Wasserman Schultz:

On behalf of the Southeastern Chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (SEAALL) and over 625 SEAALL members, I write today to ask you, as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, to support the full FY2008 funding request of the U.S. Government Printing Office.

SEAALL is a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) with members in all the states and territories listed on the letterhead above. We share AALL's mission to promote and enhance the value of law libraries, to foster law librarianship and to provide leadership and advocacy in the field of legal information and information policy.

Mary Alice Baish, AALL's Associate Washington Affairs Representative, testified before the Subcommittee on May 1. We endorse her statement in support of GPO's FY 2008 appropriations request (attached). SEAALL is committed to public access to Government information and a robust Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP).

There are more than 1200 Depository Libraries nationwide, and 3 of them are in your district: Nova Southeastern University/Law Library & Technical Center, Florida International University/Biscayne Bay Campus Library and the Broward County Division of Libraries/Broward County Library. They need your support to ensure that your constituents have easy, no-fee access to Federal government information, both current and historic. Each library has very committed librarians who serve your constituents every day—whether they need a Congressional hearing published fifty years ago, the latest Census data available only online, or expert help to navigate complex agency Web sites.
We respectfully urge you to agree to the requested levels of GPO’s Congressional Printing & Binding, Salaries & Expenses, and revolving funds for the following reasons:

• First, print is still the most useful format for certain types of information and certain categories of users. Print formats are required to meet the needs of the legal community because print is the only format that is both official and authentic. Funding is needed to ensure that the 2006 U.S. Code and the essential congressional resources of the 110th Congress are published and distributed to depository libraries in a timely manner.

• Second, GPO’s electronic initiatives are needed to replace obsolete technology and upgrade electronic services for the 21st Century. The S& E request includes crucial funding to improve the GPO Access system, catalog documents harvested from agency Web sites and authentic online publications.

• GPO’s request for the revolving fund includes $10.5 million for the continuing development of the Future Digital System, which is essential to GPO’s future. With your funding support to complete FDsys, the first public release will be next December.

We appreciate your support of the U.S. Government Printing Office and its critical role in providing your constituents with local access to Federal government information. We invite you to visit the depository libraries in your District to see for yourself the important role they have in serving your constituents. We urge you to fund fully GPO’s FY 2008 budget request. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Hirsh
SEAALL President

Enclosure