

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
1309 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-6157
(202) 225-8281 | CHA.HOUSE.GOV

Ranking Member Joe Morelle (NY-25)
Committee on House Administration
“Oversight of the Government Publishing Office in a Digital-First Era”
January 22, 2026, at 2:00 pm
Opening Statement

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome, Director Halpern. It's always a pleasure to see you back at your old stomping grounds.

If you ask historians why March 4, 1861, was such a consequential day for our republic, they might tell you that it was the day of Abraham Lincoln's first inauguration. And they'd be right.

But that's not the only reason that date matters. On that same day 165 years ago, Congress established what was then known as the Government Printing Office—one of the legislative branch's true institutional treasures.

And every day since, Congress has relied on GPO to carry out our Article One duties on behalf of the American people. Over the ensuing decades, GPO grew into one of the world's largest and most celebrated information organizations.

Today, GPO—which was appropriately renamed the Government Publishing Office in 2014—is a modern, digital-first publisher serving all three branches of government. Remarkably, it is also a largely self-funded agency.

While GPO continues to produce essential printed materials like the Congressional Record, Federal Register, and U.S. passports, it now also provides e-books, digital publishing services, mobile access, and more.

These innovations have lowered costs, increased efficiency, and strengthened public access to government information—all saving taxpayers money while enhancing transparency and accountability.

In an era marked by misinformation, fractured media, and coordinated efforts to distort the public record, the role of trusted, authoritative government information is indispensable. That is why GPO's mission—Keeping America Informed—has never mattered more.

One of the ways GPO keeps America informed is through the Federal Depository Library Program, or “FDLP.”

Over the past 165 years, GPO has produced and distributed essential government documents to more than one thousand depository libraries across the country.

These libraries—including the Rochester Public Library and the Rush Rhees Library at the University of Rochester—provide the public with a vast and constantly evolving body of government information, from newly issued and revised documents to resources on health, careers, the military, science, and more.

Beyond providing information to the public, the FDLP plays a critical continuity of government role by ensuring federal information is preserved and available in geographically dispersed locations.

I am interested in hearing today about the challenges GPO faces in administering the FDLP as digital materials become predominant, the difficulties depository libraries encounter in managing tangible collections that have outgrown their physical space, and recommendations to further modernize the program.

I also look forward to discussing GPO's broader challenges.

The agency's workforce skews older, and I'm interested in hearing about plans to ensure critical skills and institutional knowledge are successfully passed on to the next generation of employees.

This Committee—and particularly, the Subcommittee on Modernization and Innovation—has spent time discussing how the increasing volume of legislation introduced each Congress strains legislative capacity.

I am curious whether efforts to alleviate that strain, such as allowing Members to waive GPO proofreading, have been effective. **The Committee has also spent significant time examining the impact of the Loper Bright decision on institutional capacity.**

As Congress is required to draft legislation that is increasingly technical, complex, and detailed, I would welcome Director Halpern's perspective on the challenges that may pose for GPO.

Once again, Director Halpern, thank you for being with us today and for your decades of public service.

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Contacts:

Jamitress Bowden – (202) 505-0711

Sierra Norton – (202) 923-5176