



Ranking Member Morelle Opening Remarks at Committee on House Administration Hearing, “Oversight of the Operations of the Library of Congress”

The following remarks were prepared for delivery during the Committee on House Administration Subcommittee on Elections hearing on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. ET. The hearing titled, “Oversight of the Operations of the Library of Congress” took place in room 1310 of the Longworth House Office Building.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon, Dr. Hayden—thank you for being here. It’s hard to believe that you’re already nearing the tenth year of your tenure as Librarian.

To say the past decade has been politically turbulent would be an understatement, but you’ve consistently risen above the fray and have performed your duties with professionalism and in a wholly non-partisan manner. Thank you for your continued service.

Nearly a decade ago, Dr. Hayden appeared before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration for her confirmation hearing. There, she outlined a bold set of goals for her term as Librarian of Congress—goals that she and her team have successfully met.

One of those goals was to expand digital access so that all Americans could engage with the Library’s collections.

Under her leadership, the Library released its first-ever strategic plan for digitization, and last year alone nearly 100 million unique visitors explored the Library’s digital content.

This achievement was one of many made possible by modernizing Library technology—another goal Dr. Hayden emphasized at her confirmation hearing.

One of her earliest initiatives was to consolidate Library-wide technology operations into one central office.

As a result, the Library’s systems—including the Copyright Office’s enterprise copyright system—are now more cost-effective, innovative, and user-focused.

In fact, when Dr. Hayden assumed office, the Library had 31 open G.A.O. recommendations related to IT. Today, 30 of those 31 recommendations have been closed, with the final item currently in the implementation phase.

The Library's progress extends far beyond technology. When Dr. Hayden became Librarian, she pledged to "throw open the Library's treasure chest."

And last year, as part of the Visitor Experience Master Plan, the Library opened its new Treasures Gallery, which gives the public access to precious collections items not previously available for public viewing.

While the project initially faced some challenges, I understand that coordination between the Library and the AOC has improved and that those issues have largely been addressed. I look forward to hearing more about the project's status today.

I also want to take this opportunity to commend two key Library service units: the National Library Service for its continued innovation in serving readers with print disabilities; and the Congressional Research Service for hosting an excellent bipartisan New Member Seminar and helping us adapt to the post-*Chevron* environment.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't discuss the context in which this hearing is being held. The current administration has by every measure declared war on cultural institutions—libraries and museums chief among them.

Through executive directives and budget cuts, the administration is actively working to dismantle the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which helps fund libraries across the country. If this effort succeeds, libraries in virtually all our home districts will be forced to close their doors.

Even the Smithsonian has come under fire, absurdly accused of promoting improper and corrosive ideology merely for presenting historical facts this President finds inconvenient.

It doesn't take much imagination to see the Library of Congress next in the crosshairs.

But let's be clear: it is the Library of CONGRESS. As a legislative branch agency, it is wholly independent of the executive branch.

So, I find it mystifying, or at least incongruous, that the President—not Congress—appoints the Librarian of Congress.

Several years ago, Chairman Steil and I partnered on a bill that changed the Architect of the Capitol from a presidential appointment to a Congressional appointment.

That bill was signed into law by President Biden, and last year, Congress—not the President—successfully appointed a new Architect.

It is long past time to make the same change for the Librarian of Congress, as well as other legislative branch agency heads like the Director of the Government Publishing Office.

To that end, I will be drafting legislation to achieve that goal and would welcome bipartisan co-sponsorship.

Dr. Hayden, once again—thank you for your partnership with the Committee, support of the Congress, and service to the country.

I look forward to our discussion, and I yield back.

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