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Congress of the United States
Joint Committee of Printing

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510-6650

November 17, 2010

The Honorable Robert Tapella
Public Printer of the United States
Government Printing Office
732 North Capitol Street
Washington, DC 20410-0001

Dear Mr. Tapella:

I am writing as Chairman of the Joint Committee on Printing to authorize enhanced access through GPO to the latest information and analysis in three sets of documents important to Congress, legislative branch agencies, and the public. They are the "Constitution of the United States: Analysis and Interpretation" (CONAN); historical volumes of the Congressional Record; and the United States Statutes at Large.

These are key primary research sources, essential to understanding our laws and legislative history, and they should all be readily available online in electronic format. I am authorizing GPO to work with the Library of Congress to complete the following projects as quickly as possible.

The Senate Committee on Rules and Administration first authorized the creation of CONAN in 1911, and it is now written by the Library of Congress. A new edition is printed every ten years and made available online by the Government Printing Office (GPO). The Library continually updates the publication, but until now those updates have been made available only every two years in print and at GPO's online site.

To make the online version of CONAN as useful as possible to Congress and the public, it is time to put the updates online as soon as they are prepared, rather than waiting to coincide with the two-year print cycle. The Joint Committee on Printing is authorizing you to work with the Library of Congress to update the online edition as frequently as possible, and to create new and improved functions on the CONAN site. The Congress and the public should find this site accessible and user-friendly.

The new features will include greater ease of searching, with all available functions in the PDF format employed in order to allow word searches of the entire document. The GPO version also should contain a list of cases and a table of contents linked to the relevant portions of CONAN. The online version should continue to serve as a reliable, trusted source by employing verifiable digital signatures on every page. That will allow the document to be verified for judicial purposes.

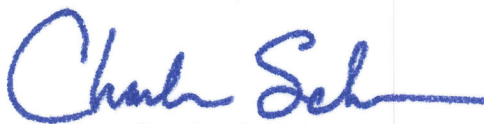
The second project which the Joint Committee on Printing hereby approves is the GPO-Library of Congress collaboration to digitize volumes of the Congressional Record dating from 1873 to 1998. I understand that the Congressional Record from other years has already been digitized. Digital files with search functions, content management capabilities, and digital authentication will be created and then published online through both GPO and the Library of Congress. I look forward to this complete record of Congressional activity being easily and widely available on the Internet.

Finally, the Joint Committee on Printing approves your request to collaborate with the Law Library of Congress to create digitized volumes of the Statutes at Large and to develop robust searching and content management tools. Archival and access copies with digitally signed pages to ensure authenticity will be incorporated into the project. Once the content has been prepared, the Statutes at Large will be published online by GPO, and the Library of Congress will use this GPO content in its public database of legislative information known as "THOMAS".

The Joint Committee commends the joint efforts of the GPO and the Library of Congress to make our nation's vital legislative and legal documents more accessible than ever before.

If you have any questions, please contact Jean Bordewich, Staff Director, or Adam Ambrogi, Administrative and Legislative Counsel, at the Senate Rules Committee (202-224-6351).

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
Chairman

cc: Members of the
Joint Committee on Printing
Daniel P. Mulhollan
Director, CRS