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March 12, 2004

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman, Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kingston:

I write to you today to reiterate the position of the American Bar Association on the need for appropriate and necessary funding of the Library of Congress, particularly in light of the invaluable resource represented in the Law Library of Congress. We filed a formal written statement for the Subcommittee's consideration in conjunction with the originally scheduled hearing of February 25, 2004. We now write to affirm those views.

As America faces the impact of threats to our national security and the further globalization of our economy, and seeks to promote democracy and advance fundamental freedoms and human rights, Congress' commitment to the Law Library of Congress becomes ever more imperative. As you heard on Thursday, the Law Library of Congress has already proven invaluable in our nation's assistance to developing democracies, and in our own war on terrorism. For instance, as work began to restore the rule of law in post-Taliban Afghanistan, the Law Library of Congress presented to groups working on the initiative one of the only known English translations of the nation's civil, criminal and commercial laws.

The Law Library is an archive of the best that the world's legal minds have produced, and also a living resource that reflects our vision of democracy and promotion of the rule of law throughout the world. To sustain and make accessible the largest and most prestigious legal collection in the world requires a skilled staff, appropriate classification of its collection, and the digitization of these materials. For example, through the Library's Global Legal Information Network (GLIN), the laws and related materials from over 48 countries are available instantly through the Internet. As American presence and the ideals of democracy itself expands around the globe, so will the need of government leaders to have ready access to information and analysis of foreign laws, institutions and infrastructures.

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While the current economic climate may present difficult funding decisions, we believe that the Library and Law Library are repositories for the very principles that sustain us as a nation. We urge you to support the funding request of the Library of Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert D. Evans". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Robert D. Evans

