

## New computing committee established

The 105th Congress is entering into an extremely hectic period. The library community is extensively involved with a number of critical areas including advanced computer technologies and appropriations issues.

On February 11 President Clinton issued an executive order establishing the Advisory Committee on High-Performance Computing and Communications, Information Technology, and the Next Generation Internet. The committee is to advise and provide information to the National Science and Technology Council on progress with the Next Generation Internet initiative and on the High-Performance Computing and Communications (HPCC) Program.

The appointment of the committee indicates the desire of the administration for the United States to maintain its leadership role in advanced computing and communications technologies.

At the first meeting of the committee in February, 21 members had been appointed, including two members of the library and information science profession: Ching-Chih Chen (Simmons College), and Sherrilynne Fuller (University of Washington the National Network of Libraries of Medicine). Ken Kennedy, director of the Center for Research on Parallel Computation at Rice University, and Bill Joy, vice-president for research at Sun Microsystems, will co-chair the committee.

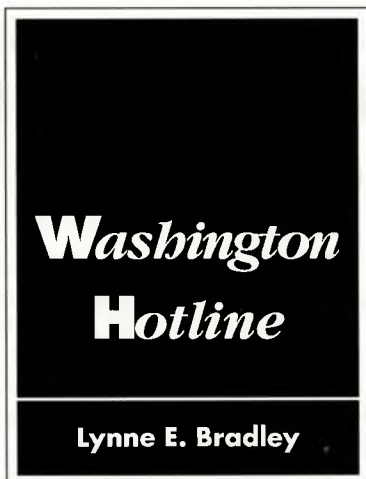
## Oakley testifies before Congress

On February 12 Robert Oakley, law professor at the Georgetown University Law Center and director of the Law Center's library, testified on the FY98 appropriations for the Government Printing Office and the Library of Congress before the Subcommittee on Legislative, House Committee on Appropriations, chaired by Rep. James Walsh (R-NY):

- **Government Printing Office.** Oakley urged the full support of the Public Printer's FY98 appropriations request of \$30,477,000

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for the Superintendent of Documents Salaries and Expenses, of which \$25,886,000 will maintain the Federal Depository Library Program. "While some policy makers may view the move to electronic information as a means of cutting government costs, no data exists to support this assertion. In fact, we believe the opposite likely to be true particularly during the transition period."

Appearing on behalf of ALA, the Association of Research Libraries, the American Association of Law Libraries, and the Special Libraries Association, Oakley expressed the library community's concern over the erosion of federal government information from the public domain and called for a revision of Title 44 that extends the definition of government information to electronic resources.

- **Library of Congress.** Speaking for the same groups, Oakley urged funding for the Library of Congress FY98 budget request of \$387.6 million (including the authority to obligate \$30.4 million in receipts) needed "to position the Library to realize the benefits of the digitized networked environment while ensuring that important programs and services are maintained." Five LC program areas were the focus: services for the blind and physically handicapped, electronic initiatives, the American Folk Life Center, arrearage reduction and cooperative cataloging, and collection security. LC was able to reduce arrearage in 1996 by 1.5 million items, a reduction of 47.2% since 1989.

He noted that with the passage of landmark telecommunications legislation [in 1996], Congress recognized that libraries are primary points of access for the public to participate in the information age. "Although only 23.6% of public libraries have full World Wide Web capability, the discounted rates now being implemented by the FCC are expected to increase this percentage rapidly."

Various library and higher education groups will be meeting on government information and information technology issues in the next few weeks. More on these activities in our next report. ■