

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WM. LACY CLAY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION
POLICY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATION, AND
THE CENSUS
HEARING ON
“ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES”**

March 13, 2003

Thank you Mr. Chairman for calling this, the first, hearing of the Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations, and the Census. All of these topics are of interest to my constituents, and I look forward to working with you to improve government activities and performance in these areas.

One of the agencies within our jurisdiction is the National Archives and Records Administration. I am proud to say that a part of the Archives, the National Personnel Records Center, is in my district. The National Personnel Records Center is one of the Archives= largest operations. It is a central repository of personnel-related records, both military and civil service. The Center provides service to Government agencies, military

veterans, former civilian Federal employees, family members, as well as researchers and historians.

Across the state, in Independence, Missouri, is the library of President Harry S. Truman. The Truman Library is one of ten presidential libraries run by the National Archives, and last week exhibited a rare copy of the Declaration of Independence. That library holds thousands of documents and artifacts from the Truman presidency, and many of those documents are available on the library web site. For example, you can go to the library web site and pull up a special message to Congress from President Truman, written on this day in 1949, laying out plans for reorganizing the State Department. The web site also points out that the Congress acted on the President's recommendation, and had a reorganization bill on his desk for signature by May 26th of that year.

Today's hearing is about making our government operate like the Truman Library. We should have an open government where each agency devotes its energy to making it easier for citizens to access government information, and to making it easy

for citizens to interact with the government when that is needed. But that is not necessarily an easy task, and getting multiple agencies to cooperate to a single point of access is even more difficult.

The Administration has set out an ambitious plan for the 24 projects reviewed by the General Accounting Office. If even half of them meet the promises implied by the titles, we will have made a substantial step towards making our government more accessible to its citizens. Unfortunately, the GAO report is not encouraging. I hope today=s testimony will show progress since that report was written. I am also curious whether GAO has gotten the updated budget documents necessary to update its work from this report.

I would like to thank our witnesses for taking time out of their busy schedules to appear before us today, and I look forward to hearing the testimony. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that my full statement be included in the record.