



July 12, 2006

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Chair, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Fax: (202) 224-2693

Dear Senator Collins:

We write in strong support of the Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006 (S. 2695) on behalf of the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries, the American Association of Law Libraries, the Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, the Medical Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, and SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition). S. 2695 would promote widespread, affordable, and effective dissemination of scientific and scholarly research results. For this reason, we encourage the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs to conduct hearings on S. 2695.

Federally funded research is a public resource collected at public expense. Importantly, increased access to this research accelerates the pace of discovery and innovation and fosters economic growth.

It is critical that this new research be readily available to physicians, researchers, and members of the public, including those who are unaffiliated with or working in locations remote from libraries that subscribe to increasingly expensive journals and databases developed from federally funded research. Indeed, results of a recent Harris Interactive poll show that the majority of U.S. adults believe that federally funded research findings should be available for free to doctors and the general public.

In scholarship, discovery is a cumulative process – new knowledge builds upon earlier findings. As broad, timely sharing of research fuels this ongoing process, the Internet offers an unprecedented and cost-effective means to accelerate scientific advancement. S. 2695 recognizes this potential and helps to facilitate its realization. Its key beneficiaries include:

- Scientists and scholars, whose research will be more broadly read and who will have fewer barriers to obtaining the research they need.
- Funders, who will gain from accelerated discovery, facilitation of interdisciplinary research methodologies, preservation of vital research findings, and an improved capacity to manage their research portfolios.
- Taxpayers, who will obtain economic and social benefits from the leveraging of their investment in scientific research through effects such as enhanced technology transfer,

broader application of research to health care provision, and more informed policy development.

While agencies could do this without legislative action – with the exception of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which introduced a voluntary policy in 2005 – none have chosen to do so. To date this voluntary NIH policy has nominal impact with a compliance rate below 4%. In fact, the NIH Public Access Working Group of the National Library of Medicine Board of Regents recently recommended that the request for public access be strengthened to a requirement, a recommendation endorsed by the NLM Board of Regents. The provisions of this bill would do just that for many federal agencies.

Posting of manuscripts stemming from agency grants or contracts falls squarely within an agency's rights and does not impinge upon the author's copyright. Nevertheless, some publishers have challenged the right of federal agencies to implement public access policies, which may discourage or inhibit agency initiatives.

This legislation is not a threat to journals and the peer review process. The Federal Research Public Access Act contains two key provisions that protect journals and the peer review process:

- A delay of up to six months in providing access to articles via the public archive (versus immediate access for journal readers).
- Inclusion in the public archive of the author's final manuscript rather than the publisher's formatted, paginated version preferred for citation purposes.

In some disciplines, freely accessible online archives have proven to supplement journal readership, not replace it. In physics, for example, where nearly 100% of new articles are freely available from birth in the arXiv.org open-access archive created more than a decade ago with US Department of Energy funding, subscription-based journals have continued to thrive. The American Physical Society and the Institute of Physics Publishing are unable to identify any subscriptions lost as a result of arXiv in the 14 years of its existence. Likewise, in a report to Congress on the results of its Public Access Policy, NIH reported that it “has no evidence to indicate that the Policy has had any impact on peer review.”


If Congress were to pass S. 2695, the most significant day-to-day effect on investigators would be improved access to research and increased impact for their own work. A growing number of studies demonstrate that research is cited more often when it is openly accessible on the Web. The process by which investigators deposit their work is expected to be relatively simple. NIH, for example, estimates that submitting a manuscript to their archive usually takes an investigator just 3–10 minutes.

This legislation will not take funding away from research to any material extent. The NIH, for example, estimates that the cost of its public access program would be \$3.5 million if 100% of the 65,000 eligible manuscripts were deposited annually. That is a tiny fraction (about 0.01%) of the agency's \$28 billion budget. It is also a small fraction of the \$30 million per year the agency spends on page charges and other subsidies to subscription-based journals. The reality is that sharing of research results is part of the research process.

The federal government sponsors an investment of \$55 billion annually in scientific research alone. During tight budgetary times, this legislation will help ensure all government departments and agencies that invest significant sums in research will achieve a greater return on their and the taxpayers' investment.

For all these reasons, we encourage the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs to conduct hearings on S. 2695. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



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Susan E. Fox
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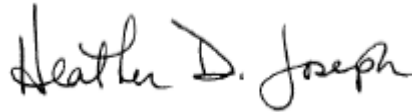
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American Association of Law Libraries

www.aallnet.org

With over 5,000 members, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) represents law librarians and related professionals who are affiliated with and serve the nearly one million men and women working in the range of U.S. legal institutions: law firms; law schools; corporate legal departments; courts; and local, state and federal government agencies. The association was founded in 1906 to promote and enhance the value of law libraries to the legal and public communities, to foster the profession of law librarianship, and to provide leadership in the field of legal information.

American Library Association

www.ala.org

The American Library Association (ALA) is the oldest and largest library association in the world, with more than 65,000 members. Its mission is to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries

www.aahsl.org

The Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) is composed of the directors of libraries of 142 accredited U. S. and Canadian medical schools belonging to or affiliated with the Association of American Medical Colleges. AAHSL's goals are to promote excellence in academic health science libraries and to ensure that the next generation of health practitioners is trained in information seeking skills that enhance the quality of health care delivery, education, and research. The Association influences legislation and policies beneficial to the common good of academic health sciences centers and their libraries, including opportunities related to open access and new models of scholarly communication.

Association of College & Research Libraries

www.ala.org/acrl

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the American Library Association, represents more than 13,000 academic and research librarians and interested individuals. ACRL is the only individual membership organization in North America that develops programs, products and services to meet the unique needs of academic and research librarians. Its initiatives enable the higher education community to understand the role that academic and research libraries play in the teaching, learning and research environments.

Association of Research Libraries

www.arl.org

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is an association of over 120 of the largest research libraries in North America. The member institutions serve over 160,000 faculty

researchers and scholars and more than 4 million students in the U.S. and Canada. ARL's mission is to influence the changing environment of scholarly communication and the public policies that affect research libraries and the communities they serve. ARL pursues this mission by advancing the goals of its member research libraries, providing leadership in public and information policy to the scholarly and higher education communities, fostering the exchange of ideas and expertise, and shaping a future environment that leverages its interests with those of allied organizations.

Medical Library Association

www.mlanet.org

The Medical Library Association (MLA) is a nonprofit, educational organization of more than 900 institutions and 3,600 individual members in the health sciences information field, with members located in 56 countries. MLA is committed to educating health information professionals, supporting health information research, promoting access to the world's health sciences information, and working to ensure that the best health information is available to all.

Special Libraries Association

www.sla.org

The Special Libraries Association (SLA) is a nonprofit global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners. SLA serves more than 11,000 members in 75 countries in the information profession, including corporate, academic and government information specialists. SLA promotes and strengthens its members through learning, advocacy and networking initiatives.

SPARC (Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition)

www.arl.org/sparc

SPARC, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resource Coalition, is an international alliance of academic and research libraries and organizations working to correct imbalances in the scholarly publishing system. Developed by ARL, SPARC has over 200 member institutions and affiliates in North America and closely collaborates with SPARC Europe, which represents more than 70 additional institutions in Europe. SPARC's strategies and activities support open access and capitalize on the networked environment to disseminate research more broadly.