

June 7, 2006

The Honorable John Cornyn  
United States Senate  
517 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

By FAX to (202) 228-2856

Dear Senator Cornyn:

The undersigned not-for-profit medical and scientific societies write to express our concerns about S.2695, the “Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006.” Mandating a six-month public release of manuscripts will be detrimental to hundreds of not-for-profit scientific societies that publish the most highly respected scientific journals because it will jeopardize crucial processes, like peer review, which are necessary to ensure that scientific information is accurate. The legislation, as drafted, would also erode the ability of not-for-profit societies to provide services to the public and scientific community, such as improving patient care through the continuing medical education programs that their journals support.

Scientific societies fully support the goal of increasing access to research and have been at the forefront of innovations in access, use, and archiving of scientific publications. Federal mandates are unnecessary; better alternatives to this proposed legislation already exist that ensure that the public has access to research information. In fact, most not-for-profit publishers currently provide free public access to the full text of articles within 12 months of publication, allow free immediate access to selected articles with important public health significance, and distribute free articles to scientists working in many developing nations. As a result, more scientific papers are now available to more people than at any time in history.

While federal funds may support – in whole or in part – the research reported in journal articles, it is extremely important to realize that the federal government does not pay for all of the very important processes that lead to the publication of that research. Many not-for-profit scientific societies provide important services that are essential to ensuring the publication and dissemination of accurate scientific information: peer review, copyediting, formatting, printing for distribution, publishing on-line, searching, and permanent archiving. These services require a substantial private sector investment that results in prompt access to trusted research results and the reliable archiving of articles at no additional cost to the public.

Even though extensive public access already exists, a representative group of not-for-profit publishers is working with the National Institutes of Health to supply articles to assist NIH in managing its research portfolio and increase participation with its “enhanced access” program. Legislative intervention, including the changes required by this legislation, will compromise the success of this effort, thereby undermining the development of a program that effectively addresses the needs and concerns of the public, the Federal Government, and not-for-profit scientific societies.

We urge you to reconsider whether such legislation is needed given the widespread access to the scientific literature that publishers and the Federal Government already provide.

Sincerely,

American Association of Anatomists  
American Association for Cancer Research  
American Association for Clinical Chemistry  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Physiological Society  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Plant Biologists  
American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
American Society for Bone and Mineral Research  
American Society for Hematology  
American Society for Investigative Pathology  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics  
American Sociological Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of Biomolecular Research Facilities  
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories  
Crop Science Society of America  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Health Affairs  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Ornithological Council  
Poultry Science Association  
Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine  
Society for General Microbiology  
Society for the Study of Reproduction  
Soil Science Society of America  
The American Association of Immunologists  
The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology  
The Biophysical Society  
The Endocrine Society  
The Histochemical Society  
The Physiological Society  
The Protein Society

Cc: Katherine Coughlin

June 7, 2006

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman  
United States Senate  
706 Hart Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

By FAX to (202) 224-9750

Dear Senator Lieberman:

The undersigned not-for-profit medical and scientific societies write to express our concerns about S.2695, the “Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006.” Mandating a six-month public release of manuscripts will be detrimental to hundreds of not-for-profit scientific societies that publish the most highly respected scientific journals because it will jeopardize crucial processes, like peer review, which are necessary to ensure that scientific information is accurate. The legislation, as drafted, would also erode the ability of not-for-profit societies to provide services to the public and scientific community, such as improving patient care through the continuing medical education programs that their journals support.

Scientific societies fully support the goal of increasing access to research and have been at the forefront of innovations in access, use, and archiving of scientific publications. Federal mandates are unnecessary; better alternatives to this proposed legislation already exist that ensure that the public has access to research information. In fact, most not-for-profit publishers currently provide free public access to the full text of articles within 12 months of publication, allow free immediate access to selected articles with important public health significance, and distribute free articles to scientists working in many developing nations. As a result, more scientific papers are now available to more people than at any time in history.

While federal funds may support – in whole or in part – the research reported in journal articles, it is extremely important to realize that the federal government does not pay for all of the very important processes that lead to the publication of that research. Many not-for-profit scientific societies provide important services that are essential to ensuring the publication and dissemination of accurate scientific information: peer review, copyediting, formatting, printing for distribution, publishing on-line, searching, and permanent archiving. These services require a substantial private sector investment that results in prompt access to trusted research results and the reliable archiving of articles at no additional cost to the public.

Even though extensive public access already exists, a representative group of not-for-profit publishers is working with the National Institutes of Health to supply articles to assist NIH in managing its research portfolio and increase participation with its “enhanced access” program. Legislative intervention, including the changes required by this legislation, will compromise the success of this effort, thereby undermining the development of a program that effectively addresses the needs and concerns of the public, the Federal Government, and not-for-profit scientific societies.

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American Society for Investigative Pathology  
American Society for Nutrition  
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics  
American Sociological Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of Biomolecular Research Facilities  
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories  
Crop Science Society of America  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Health Affairs  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Ornithological Council  
Poultry Science Association  
Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine  
Society for General Microbiology  
Society for the Study of Reproduction  
Soil Science Society of America  
The American Association of Immunologists  
The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology  
The Biophysical Society  
The Endocrine Society  
The Histochemical Society  
The Physiological Society  
The Protein Society

Cc: Wilson Wang, MD, MPH, MPA

June 7, 2006

The Honorable Susan M. Collins  
Chair, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

By FAX to: (202) 224-9603

Dear Chairwoman Collins:

The undersigned not-for-profit medical and scientific societies write to express our concerns about S.2695, the “Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006.” This bill, which was referred to your committee, will be detrimental to hundreds of not-for-profit scientific societies that publish the most highly respected scientific journals because it will jeopardize crucial processes, like peer review, which are necessary to ensure that scientific information is accurate. The legislation, as drafted, would also erode the ability of not-for-profit societies to provide services to the public and scientific community, such as improving patient care through the continuing medical education programs that their journals support.

Scientific societies fully support the goal of increasing access to research and have been at the forefront of innovations in access, use, and archiving of scientific publications. Federal mandates are unnecessary; better alternatives to this proposed legislation already exist that ensure that the public has access to research information. In fact, most not-for-profit publishers currently provide free public access to the full text of articles within 12 months of publication, allow free immediate access to selected articles with important public health significance, and distribute free articles to scientists working in many developing nations. As a result, more scientific papers are now available to more people than at any time in history.

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Even though extensive public access already exists, a representative group of not-for-profit publishers is working with the National Institutes of Health to supply articles to assist NIH in managing its research portfolio and increase participation with its “enhanced access” program. Legislative intervention, including the changes required by this legislation, will compromise the success of this effort, thereby undermining the development of a program that effectively addresses the needs and concerns of the public, the Federal Government, and not-for-profit scientific societies.

We strongly urge you to oppose S. 2695 given the widespread access to the scientific literature that publishers and the Federal Government already provide.

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American Association of Anatomists  
American Association for Cancer Research  
American Association for Clinical Chemistry  
American Dairy Science Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Physiological Society  
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American Society for Nutrition  
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American Sociological Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of Biomolecular Research Facilities  
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories  
Crop Science Society of America  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Health Affairs  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Ornithological Council  
Poultry Science Association  
Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine  
Society for General Microbiology  
Society for the Study of Reproduction  
Soil Science Society of America  
The American Association of Immunologists  
The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology  
The Biophysical Society  
The Endocrine Society  
The Histochemical Society  
The Physiological Society  
The Protein Society

Cc: Michael Bopp  
Joyce Rechtschaffen