



July 21, 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1103
Via Fax: 202-224-2126

Dear Senator Akaka;

On behalf of the more than 90 patient, consumer, research, and publisher organizations that comprise the Alliance for Taxpayer Access, I write to encourage you to co-sponsor S.1373, "The Federal Research Public Access Act of 2009." This bill will provide an important mechanism to ensure that manuscripts of peer-reviewed scientific articles resulting from research funded by the U.S. government can be freely accessed and used by American taxpayers.

Timely, barrier-free access to the results of federally funded research is an essential component of our collective investment in science. We fully agree that this information should be shared in cost-effective ways that take advantage of the new technologies available to us and that this increased sharing will help to advance the pace of discovery, as well as to speed the translation of this knowledge into public benefits.

The establishment of interoperable, open digital repositories containing publicly funded research will create an unprecedented, rich new resource for researchers – and all interested members of the public – to tap into. It will also allow this critical layer of information to be linked, for the first time, to the wealth of other publicly accessible databases at federal agencies. Enhanced access to these repositories will further ensure that the maximum use of this research is fully realized – enabling previously unobtainable connections and discoveries to be made. Creating this kind of equitable access also means that new connections can be drawn by any interested citizen – entrepreneurs, business owners, teachers, students – who currently simply do not have access.

The proposed bill balances the needs of all stakeholders in the scientific research community. While creating opportunities for unprecedented access and use of research, it provides important safeguards to protect the interests of those who contribute to ensuring the validity and quality of research results. Specifically, the inclusion of an embargo period provides an initial, exclusive distribution option for traditional publishers who may wish to maintain a subscription model for access. Additionally, the requirement for deposit of the author's raw final manuscript, rather than the final published article, allows publishers the opportunity to continue to market a product that contains significant value-added enhancements beyond what is available in the public repositories. The flexibility for each agency to determine its own strategy for establishing a digital repository reflects an understanding that what works for one agency might not be appropriate for another; that one size does not fit all.

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S.1373 reflects the growing worldwide trend of funding agencies and higher education institutions actively working to maximize access to and sharing of research results, recognizing that increasing usage will help deliver an accelerated return on their investment in research. The bill also advances the progress made by the public access policy of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the first U.S. agency to require public access to taxpayer-funded research. Since its implementation, the NIH policy has resulted in ~4,500 new biomedical manuscripts being made publicly available each month. Demand for this information is extremely high, with more than 450,000 unique users accessing material from this repository each day. Under S.1373, research results related to issues of equally critical importance – from climate change to renewable energy – will be just as readily accessible to the public.

The Federal Research Public Access Act helps to create a level playing field where all interested citizens have equal access to the results of publicly funded research. As teachers, students, researchers, librarians, entrepreneurs, small business owners, health care workers, patients, and other active public citizens, we firmly believe that access to important, up-to-date information will help to ensure that we can contribute as effectively as possible to our local knowledge economies, and to our national innovation and competitiveness efforts. The potential advancement of scientific research across disciplines that would be made possible by this bill, when enacted, has tremendous positive implications for all Americans.

Please consider adding your name as a co-sponsor of this crucial proposal. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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

Heather Joseph, Spokesperson
(202) 296-2296 ext 157, heather@arl.org



Members

AIDS Action Baltimore - MD
AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition - NY
American Association of Law Libraries - DC
American Library Association - DC
American Medical Student Association - VA
Amherst College Library - MA
Arthritis Foundation - DC
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum - DC
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries - WA
Association of Cancer Online Resources - NY
Association of College & Research Libraries - IL
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs - DC
Association of Research Libraries - DC
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries - GA
Autism Speaks (formerly National Alliance for Autism Research) - DC
Autosomal Recessive Polycystic Kidney Disease and Congenital Hepatic Fibrosis Alliance (ARPKD/CHF Alliance) - PA
Barth Syndrome Foundation - FL
Boston College Libraries - MA
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Chemists Without Borders - Canada
Chordoma Foundation - NC
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Committee for Economic Development - DC
Consumer Project on Technology (CPTech) - DC
CUNY – City College Libraries - NY
Cutaneous Lymphoma Foundation (formerly Mycosis Fungoides Foundation) - MI
Coalition for Heritable Disorders of Connective Tissue - DC
Colorado State University - CO
Conquer Fragile X Syndrome - FL
The Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) Foundation - OH
Cystinosis Research Network - IL
Denison University – William H. Doane Library - OH
Down Syndrome Treatment and Research Foundation - CA
Eastern Kentucky University Libraries - KY
Emory University Libraries - GA
Essential Action - DC
Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE) - FL
Francis Countway Library of Medicine (Harvard Medical School) - MA
FreePatentsOnline
Genetic Alliance - DC
Global Neuroscience Initiative Foundation - WA
GNU EPrints - UK
Greater Western Library Alliance - MO
International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association (IMDSA) - TX
International Journal of Medical Sciences - MD
IP Justice - CA
IsoDicentric 15 Exchange, Advocacy and Support (IDEAS) - OR
Kent State University Libraries - OH
Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology - MO
Loyola University Chicago Libraries - IL
Medical Education Online - MI
National Coalition for PKU & Allied Disorders - MA
National Fragile X Foundation - MI
National Tay-Sachs & Allied Diseases Association - MA
New England Biolabs - MA
New York State Higher Education Initiative (NYSHEI) - NY
Oberlin College - OH
Ohio Library and Information Network - OH
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy - OH
Planetree - CT
Prader-Willi Syndrome Association - FL
Public Knowledge - DC
Public Library of Science - CA
Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum (PXE) International - DC
Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) - DC
South Dakota State University, Hilton M. Briggs Library - SD
Special Libraries Association - VA
Spina Bifida Association of America - DC
Students for Free Culture - FL
Swarthmore College - PA
Tourette Syndrome Association - DC
Trinity University Coates Library - TX
Tufts University Libraries - MA
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines - NJ
University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries - CO
University of Connecticut Libraries - CT
University of Kansas - KS
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University of Wisconsin – Madison Libraries - WI
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh – Forrest R. Polk Library - WI
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Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization -