

February 24, 2012

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1032 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee:

The undersigned organizations and institutions write to express our strong concerns with H.R. 3699, the Research Works Act, which has been referred to your Committee. This bill would impede public access to valuable research results from work funded by federal agencies.

Most immediately, H.R. 3699 would repeal the successful National Institutes of Health (NIH) Public Access Policy, which currently ensures that the public receives timely, free access to articles reporting on the results of our nation's \$29 billion annual investment in medical research. Besides cutting off access to this crucial information, the proposed bill would prohibit all other federal science agencies from enacting similar policies, unfairly restricting the public's ability to access the results of our collective investment in scientific research.

The current NIH policy, with its 12-month delay in public access, has a proven track record of delivering positive benefits to U.S. taxpayers, while holding the government accountable for public investment in scientific research. It provides access to more than a half million individual users each day, including health care professionals, patients, caregivers and their families. People rely on the accessibility of this information to improve their understanding of the medical conditions they are facing as well as their quality of care.

As of today, the PubMed Central database contains more than 115,000 articles on hypertension research, 150,000 on diabetes research, and more than 110,000 on heart disease research. U.S. citizens whose tax dollars underwrite this research, believe that crucial details of the most recent medical advancements in these areas should be available to them, and to the doctors and caregivers whose responsibilities are the health and long life of all Americans. Access to up-to-date, health-related information plays a crucial role in ensuring that patients are as educated as possible about their individual situations, including the latest therapies. PubMed Central ensures that access, after a 12-month delay, for patients, as well as students, physicians, and others who do not have ready access to the exclusive publications.

H.R. 3699 will affect access to not only these vital biomedical research results stemming from NIH funding, but also scientific research underwritten by **all** other federal agencies. Access to critical information on energy, economics, computational science, engineering and hundreds of other areas that directly impact the lives and well being of the public would be unduly limited by this proposed legislation.

Taxpayers fund research with the expectation that the resulting ideas and discoveries will propel science, stimulate the economy and improve the lives of all Americans. Public support for science is enhanced when the public can directly see the benefits from our investment in scientific research. Scientific progress depends on the broadest possible dissemination of

February 24, 2012

Page 2 of 4

knowledge, and the ability to build upon the work of others.

The NIH Public Access Policy is supported by the patient advocacy, higher education, library, and research communities – including dozens of Nobel Prize winners – as a means to address the costly barriers that have impeded so many from accessing vital information, and as an opportunity for all communities to benefit from access to publicly funded information in an equitable, timely and affordable manner.

Given the success of the NIH policy and the potential for other similar programs, we urge your opposition to H.R. 3699, the Research Works Act. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the NIH Public Policy continues to serve science, the research community, and the public, and that similar policies can be enacted across other federal science agencies.

Sincerely,

Alzheimer's Association

American Association of State Colleges and Universities

American Brain Tumor Association

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Society for Cell Biology

Arizona State University

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF)

Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI)

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)

Association of Research Libraries

Auburn University

Clemson University

Colon Cancer Alliance

Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance

Columbia University

Cornell University

Dakota State University

Elizabeth Ann Williamson Foundation

Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered

Fight Collateral Cancer

Florida State University

Georgia State University

Harvard University

HealthHIV

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Association - HCMA

Indiana University

Johns Hopkins University

LIVESTRONG

February 24, 2012

Page 3 of 4

Lymphoma Research Foundation  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Michigan State University  
Michigan Technological University  
Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance  
National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Patient Advocate Foundation  
North Carolina State University  
Northern Illinois University  
Ohio State University  
Oregon State University  
Ovarian Cancer Advocacy Alliance (OCAA)  
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance  
Ovarian Cancer Together  
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network  
Parkinson's Action Network  
Penn State University  
Portland State University  
Purdue University  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology  
South Dakota State University  
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale  
Stanford University  
State University of New York  
Stony Brook University  
SUNY Council of Library Directors  
Susan G. Komen for the Cure® Advocacy Alliance  
University at Albany  
University at Buffalo  
University of Arkansas  
University of California System  
University of Central Florida  
University of Cincinnati  
University of Colorado, Boulder  
University of Connecticut  
University of Illinois  
University of Iowa  
University of Kansas  
University of Kentucky  
University of Louisville  
University of Maryland  
University of Massachusetts Amherst

February 24, 2012

Page 4 of 4

University of Michigan  
University of Minnesota  
University of Minnesota Senate Library Committee  
University of Nebraska  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
University of North Carolina, Greensboro  
University of Oregon  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of South Dakota  
University of Utah  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Vanderbilt University  
Washington University, St. Louis  
Wayne State University  
Y-ME National Breast Cancer Organization  
You'll Never Walk Alone