

February 24, 2012

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 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

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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
Lymphoma Research Foundation
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance

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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
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Minnesota Senate Library Committee
University of Nebraska
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

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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