

February 16, 2007

Senator Susan Collins
461 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Joseph Lieberman
706 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators,

The undersigned organizations are writing to express their support for the Federal Research Public Access Act and to urge the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs to act quickly to approve this important legislation when it is reintroduced in the 110th Congress. This groundbreaking bill is intended to promote the crucial dissemination of scientific knowledge by taking advantage of new opportunities presented by the Internet. The Act would require that most peer-reviewed publications of scientific research supported by federal tax dollars be made available online to the public free of charge within six months of initial publication.

The dissemination of scientific, and especially medical, research findings is integral to achieving advances that have the potential to save and improve countless lives. The Internet now provides an unprecedented opportunity to amplify the rewards of medical research by making it more widely and easily available than ever before. Greater access to scientific findings helps scientists build on cutting edge research and match pressing challenges with available expertise, accelerating innovation that provides treatments and cures.

It is also critically important to expand access to medical research findings for patients, their loved ones, and their physicians. Peer-reviewed medical papers already available online are of great benefit to doctors in informing treatment decisions and providing patients and their loved ones with invaluable tools that better inform and empower them. However, too few papers are now readily available to the public online, including the majority of papers supported with taxpayer funding. Many online scientific papers require expensive subscriptions or appear in rare journals that even most scientists cannot access while others are not placed online at all. Congress should ensure that the public reaps the full value of its investment in science by making publicly funded scientific publications easily available to scientists, medical researchers, physicians, students and patients.

As organizations concerned with public health and a fair return on public investment in the creation of knowledge, we urge the 110th Congress to take the next step and pass this important legislation. We are pleased to be part of a broad coalition, including hundreds of consumers, academics, librarians, students and many other stakeholders that have expressed their support for the Public Access Act, in order to ensure barrier-free access to taxpayer-funded research (see: <http://www.taxpayeraccess.org/member.html>).

If you have questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please contact Ben Krohmal of Knowledge Ecology International at (202) 332 2670.

Respectfully,

AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition	Essential Action
Alliance for Human Research Protection (AHRP)	Families USA
American Medical Student Association	Genetic Alliance
Arthritis Foundation	Genetic Alliance BioBank
Autism Speaks	Harm Reduction Coalition
C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition	Health GAP (Global Access Project)
Center for International Environmental Law	International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association
Center for Science in the Public Interest	Knowledge Ecology International
Chemical Sensitivity Disorders Association	National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Coalition of Heritable Disorders of Connective Tissue	National Tay Sachs and Allied Diseases Association
Community Catalyst	Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
Christopher Reeve Foundation	People's Health Movement – USA
Connecticut Legal Services	PXE International
Consumer Federation of America	Universities Allied for Essential Medicine
Consumer Union	William E. Morris Institute for Justice

In the spirit of open and collaborative science that transcends national borders, the following non-US based groups also add their support:

Consumer Association for Quality of Life (EKPIZO)

Consumers' Protection Center (KEPKA)

Health Action International – Europe

Healthy Skepticism Inc

Insulin Dependant Diabetes Trust

International Society of Drug Bulletins

Korean Pharmacists for Democratic Society

Wemos Foundation

Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention Project (ZAPP)