

March 31, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of these 12 national and regional library, publishing, funding, research and advocacy organizations, we urge you to protect the provision ensuring that taxpayers are guaranteed timely, free access to the results of publicly-funded research (Section 2527) in the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (S.1260) during conference negotiations between the House and Senate.

Section 2527 would codify the current policy established by President Obama's [2013 White House Memorandum on Increasing Public Access to Federally Funded Scientific Research](#) by "directing federal agencies funding more than \$100 million annually in research and development expenditures to provide for free online public access to federally-funded research no later than 12 months after publication in peer-reviewed journals, *preferably sooner*." The Senate already sent a strong message when it passed the USICA legislation that public access to federally-funded research is a key element of our innovation and competitiveness strategy.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated just how hard it is for researchers, physicians, and public health experts to use research behind a paywall. At the start of the pandemic, one of the first actions policymakers (including the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy) took was to ask publishers to make all coronavirus-related journal articles openly available in order to accelerate our understanding of the virus. The resulting [database of open access articles](#) has been a tremendous asset to researchers, and has been accessed more than *275 million times* since its launch. The demand - and value - of these articles to the research community and the public is clear. We should ensure that all U.S. taxpayer-funded research on other diseases and pressing societal issues like climate change is readily available.

Despite the success of the open access database for COVID-related research, the majority of taxpayer-funded research outputs are still locked behind publisher paywalls or inaccessible in proprietary databases, stifling the broad dissemination of knowledge and our ability to innovate for the public good. The language on public access in Section 2527 of S.1260 is a crucial step towards making taxpayer-funded research readily available and fully usable by scientists and the public alike.

We were pleased to see the Senate support the language on public access when it passed S. 1260 and urge you to maintain this language in the final bill.

Sincerely,

American Library Association
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries
Association of College & Research Libraries
Association of Research Libraries
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries
Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions
Creative Commons
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Greater Western Library Alliance
Open Society Foundations
Public Library of Science
SPARC

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