

February 9, 2012

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Cummings:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express strong opposition to H.R. 3699, the Research Works Act. This bill would repeal the successful National Institutes of Health (NIH) Public Access Policy, a hard-fought-for policy that secured no-fee public access to NIH's taxpayer-funded research. The legislation would also block the development of similar public access policies at other federal agencies.

The NIH Public Access Policy has resulted in the provision of access to more than a half a million individual users each day, including health care professionals, patients, caregivers and their families. These users rely on the no-fee accessibility of this information to improve their understanding of the medical conditions they are facing as well as their quality of care.

As members of the public whose tax dollars underwrite this research, we expect that crucial details of the most recent medical advancements in these areas are made available to us, and to the doctors and caregivers whose responsibilities are the health and long life of all Americans. This legislation would deny us that access. The effect of this bill also would be felt in areas beyond biomedical research.

H.R. 3699 would affect access to scientific research underwritten by *all* other federal agencies. Access to critical information on energy, the environment, climate change, and hundreds of other areas that directly affect the lives and well-being of the public would be unfairly and unwisely limited by this proposed legislation.

Our federal government funds research with the expectation that the resulting ideas and discoveries will propel science, stimulate the economy, and improve the lives of all Americans. Scientific progress depends on the broadest possible dissemination of knowledge, and the ability to build upon the work of others. Congress should be focused on improving the economy and ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and effectively. The NIH Public Access Policy has a proven track record of delivering positive benefits to the public, while holding the government accountable for public investment in scientific research; H.R. 3699 would lead to exactly the opposite effect.

Thank you for considering our views. Please contact me if you need further information.

Sincerely,

American Association of University Professors

American Historical Association

American Library Association

Association of American Physicians and Surgeons

Californians Aware

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington – CREW

Community Research

Cost of Government Center

Defending Dissent Foundation

Demand Progress

Doctor Patient Medical Association

Essential Information

Humanist Society of New Mexico

iSolon.org

Mine Safety and Health News

National Coalition Against Censorship

National Coalition for History

OMB Watch

OpenTheGovernment.org

Progressive Librarians Guild

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

Rutherford Institute

Sage Information Services

Society of American Archivists

Society of Professional Journalists

Special Libraries Association

Tully Center for Free Speech at Syracuse University

Utah Foundation for Open Government

Washington Coalition for Open Government

William A. Wise Law Library at the University of Colorado Law School