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ALA American Library Association

September 29, 2009

United States Senate
Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 65,000 members of the American Library Association (ALA), a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to improving library services and promoting the public interest in a free and open information society.

Introduced by Senators Lieberman and Cornyn, the *Federal Research Public Access Act of 2009* (S. 1373) would help ensure free, timely online access to the published results of taxpayer-funded research produced by 11 U.S. federal agencies and departments. The ALA strongly supports S. 1373 and the ALA Council recently adopted a resolution (attached), at the ALA Annual Conference in July 2009 encouraging its passage.

Supporters of public access – including librarians, library patrons, faculty, students, researchers, research institutions, consumers, patients and the public – would like the ability to search and access the archive of non-classified research. Such access would allow librarians the ability to better assist library patrons with their information and research needs as well as allow direct access by the public.

Please do not hesitate to contact our staff or me should you need any additional assistance as we urge Congress to take action to increase access to taxpayer-funded information.

Sincerely,



Emily Sheketoff
Executive Director, Washington Office
American Library Association

Attachment

ALA American Library Association

2009 CD #20.5
2009 ALA Annual Conference

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING FEDERAL RESEARCH PUBLIC ACCESS ACT

- WHEREAS, Research sponsored by the United States government is funded at the expense of the public and conducted for the public good; and
- WHEREAS, Free public access to this research is necessary for the advancement of social and scientific knowledge both in the United States and throughout the world, and is essential to maintaining an informed citizenry; and
- WHEREAS, Much of this research is not readily accessible to the general public; and
- WHEREAS, Senator Joseph Lieberman and Senator John Cornyn have introduced S. 1373, the Federal Research Public Access Act of 2009 (FRPAA) which requires specified Federal agencies to develop public access policies relating to research conducted by employees of that agency or from funds administered by that agency; and
- WHEREAS, FRPAA also requires each Federal agency with extramural research expenditures over \$100 million to develop a public access policy that provides for submission of electronic manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals to be made available free to the public within six months of publication; and
- WHEREAS, The law as proposed may fail to include intramural funding investments in research activities; and
- WHEREAS, FRPAA also requires for long-term preservation of research findings in a “stable digital repository maintained by the Federal agency” or any repository meeting the conditions of the Federal agency for “free public access, interoperability, and long-term preservation”; and
- WHEREAS, FRPAA provides for greater transparency with regards to how public money is spent; and

WHEREAS, The American Library Association supports public access to information and that there should be equal, ready, and equitable access to information collected, compiled, produced, sponsored, and disseminated by the Federal government; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association (ALA):

1. Urges Congress to ensure public access to research conducted by federal agency employees or through funds administered by federal agencies through passage of the Federal Research Public Access bill S. 1373.
2. Urges Congress to amend the bill to calculate the combined research expenditures from both intramural and extramural research activities to reach the \$100 million threshold as articulated in the current draft of the legislation.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Wednesday, July 15, 2009
In Chicago, Illinois



Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and ALA Council Secretary