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Public Access to Taxpayer-Funded Research

The federal government spends billions of dollars of taxpayer money each year to fund scientific research. As a result of this massive investment, Americans have a reasonable expectation that the results of taxpayer-funded research will be made publicly available.

The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) strongly **supports** the *Federal Research Public Access Act* (FRPAA) (S. 2096 and H.R. 4004), which would ensure timely public access to the published results of federally funded research. FRPAA would expand the successful model created by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Public Access Policy, which guarantees that the results of our nation's multi-billion dollar annual investment in biomedical research reach the broadest possible audience. The NIH Public Access Policy requires, in exchange for receiving federal research dollars, that grantees make manuscripts of their research results accessible online via the NIH PubMed Central database within 12 months of publication. This provides the American public with a permanent archive of the published results of NIH funded research, which is especially useful for health care professionals, patients, caregivers and their families.

AALL expressed strong opposition to the *Research Works Act* (H.R. 3699), which would have prohibited federal agencies from disseminating private-sector research without the prior consent of the publisher or author. If enacted, this legislation would have stifled the free flow of knowledge, thereby hindering new research and discovery. Thankfully, the RWA's sponsors, Representatives Issa and Maloney, concluded that the RWA "has exhausted the useful role it can play in the [open access] debate" and have decided not to take further legislative action on HR 3699.

AALL urges members of Congress to SUPPORT the *Federal Research Public Access Act* (S. 2096 and H.R. 4004) because:

- **Members of the public have a right to access research funded by their taxpayer dollars.** The NIH Public Access Policy provides access to more than a half million users each weekday - including health care professionals, patients, caregivers and their families - who rely on this information to better understand medical conditions and improve the quality of care. The public has a strong interest in accessing the latest taxpayer-funded research from all agencies. FRPAA would require federal agencies with an extramural research budget of more than \$100 million to make federally-funded research available online and free to the general public.
- **FRPAA would promote the national movement toward greater government transparency.** Recently, as part of the Obama Administration's Open Government Directive, the Office of Science and Technology Policy issued a Request for Information on the potential implementation of public access to information across all U.S. science agencies. Universities around the country are also implementing open access policies.
- **The NIH Public Access Policy has been a successful model for open access and should be expanded.** The NIH Public Access Policy has a proven track record of delivering positive benefits to the public without causing harm to the publishing industry.

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