



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

December 12, 2013

Dear Representative Bucshon,

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) to strongly oppose language related to the open access to publicly funded research in Title III, Section 302, of the proposed “Frontiers in Innovation, Research, Science, and Technology Act of 2013 Act” (FIRST Act). NAGPS represents more than 600,000 graduate and professional students across the United States through more than 90 campus student member organizations. While NAGPS enthusiastically supports open access to federally funded research, this proposed language does not provide the level of access included in other solutions with bipartisan support, and is not in line with best practices or students’ best interests.

Proposed language related to open access in the FIRST bill would severely undercut the ability of students, researchers, doctors and the public to receive timely, equitable, online access to articles and data reporting on the results of taxpayer-funded research. As graduate and professional students we contribute significantly to scientific research and are deeply affected by the availability of scientific research articles.

Provisions within the FIRST bill would make articles reporting on taxpayer-funded research only publicly available after two years. This provision significantly undermines the established best practice for this policy, which has been in place at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for more than five years. The NIH policy includes a one year embargo period for NIH-funded research, which has shown no impact to traditional academic publishers and has also created tangible benefits for the American public, research and scientific discovery¹. The proposed language also undermines the widely-supported White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Directive on Public Access to the Results of Federally Funded Research², and would put the U.S. at a severe disadvantage compared with other countries and organizations that have policies that promote innovation and competitiveness, including open access provisions at the World Bank³, the European Union⁴, and the United Kingdom⁵.

Now is the time for our nation to focus on efficiency and economic advancements to continue to fuel our economy and drive innovation. Open access to federally funded research helps achieve this goal and creates transparency in government funding and accountability for American taxpayers’ money. Our economy can’t wait. We need research and innovation now, and an open access policy with a one-year embargo or less can help make this happen. The proposed provision does exactly the opposite, imposing restrictions on access to research results that benefit one small sector of a publishing industry, rather than encourage their use by the widest possible audience among the American people.

Section 302 would adversely affect the research, teaching, and learning that happen throughout institutions of higher education around the nation. Graduate students are unique in the university community, as we are both students and often instructors for undergraduate students.

NAGPS member schools:

Arizona State University
Arkansas State University
Armstrong Atlantic State University
Auburn University
Baylor University
Bentley University
Boston University
Bryn Mawr College
Carnegie Mellon University
Case Western Reserve University
Chatham University
Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Drexel University
Duke University
East Carolina University
East Tennessee State University
Eastern Illinois University
Emerson College
Florida Atlantic University
Florida International University
Florida State University
George Mason University
Grand Valley State University
Harvard University
High Point University
Johns Hopkins University
Kent State University
Loyola University Maryland
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Missouri University of Science and Technology
North Carolina State University
Northern Arizona University
Northwestern University
Ohio State University
Oklahoma State University
Old Dominion University
Pennsylvania State University
Regent University
Rice University
Southern University
St. Cloud State University
St. Louis University
Stony Brook University
Syracuse University
Texas A&M University
Texas Tech University
Tufts University
University of Akron
University of Alabama, Birmingham
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa
University of Arizona
University of Arkansas, Little Rock
University of California
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Merced
University of California, San Diego
University of Central Florida
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado
University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of Louisville
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Miami
University of Mississippi
University of Missouri
University of Missouri, St. Louis
University of Montana
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Nevada, Reno
University of New England
University of New Haven
University of North Texas
University of Notre Dame
University of Oklahoma
University of Pittsburgh
University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus
University of South Dakota
University of South Florida
University of Southern California
University of Tennessee Knoxville
University of Toledo
Virginia Commonwealth University
Washington State University
Washington University in St. Louis
Western Michigan University
Xavier University

Access to the most current research is vital to develop relevant curriculum and enable a complete, up-to-date education. As researchers ourselves, we know first-hand the tremendous benefit of new and timely research articles. Rather than impede students' access to these resources, as Section 302 of the FIRST Act does, the government should actively ensure students get the full benefit of our nation's collective investment in science. After all, our future economic competitiveness will rely on workers with an advanced education in fields like biotechnology and biomedical sciences—among many others—that depends on unfettered access to current research literature.

We stand by the current trajectory for open access to federally funded research implemented by the NIH and the White House directive that allows for public access after one year. These policies are simply the best way to ensure our nation's continuing competitiveness in education, innovation and science. We urge you to oppose Section 302 of the FIRST Act.

Sincerely,



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[1] <http://publicaccess.nih.gov/policy.htm>

[2] http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/ostp_public_access_memo_2013.pdf

[3] <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:23164491-pagePK:64257043-piPK:437376-theSitePK:4607,00.html>

[4] <http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.topic&id=1294&clang=1>

[5] <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/documents/RCUKOpenAccessPolicy.pdf>