July [XX], 2015

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

340 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper and Members of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs,

On behalf of the [Name of Student Government], of the [Name of University], I am writing in support of S. 779, the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research (FASTR) Act of 2015.

FASTR provides an important mechanism to ensure that peer-reviewed scientific articles resulting from research funded by the U.S. government are openly and transparently accessible to American taxpayers on the Internet. We believe that broad access to these articles is a crucial component of our nation's investment in science. We strongly encourage you to support this legislation and would like to see it move to the full Senate for consideration.

FASTR is a priority for [Name of Student Government] because it will ensure faster access to cutting edge research for graduate and professional students at [Name of University] and across the country. Research is the primary conduit through which information is communicated to students at the graduate-professional level. Faster and more complete access to the results of research will improve the training of America’s high-skilled workers. The FASTR Act will provide graduate-professional students and all other taxpayers with improved access to federally funded research and the opportunity to make a greater impact on our society.

[Name of Student Government] fully supports the shortened embargo period proposed in FASTR which improves on current policy, reducing the embargo period to 6 months from 12. For graduate-professional student researchers any embargo period is problematic because it inhibits our ability to access the latest cutting edge research, slows the process of scientific discovery, and increases the likelihood of duplicating previous work.

[Name of Student Government] believes FASTR will also provide significant benefits for the American economy. The Human Genome Project (HGP) provides a powerful analogy demonstrating how openness in research can spur large economic returns. The US government invested $3.8 billion in sequencing the human genome and studies have shown that the HGP spurred approximately $800 billion of economic activity and the creation of 300,000 jobs[[1]](#footnote-0). Much of that economic activity is only possible because the results of HGP research were made immediately and openly available. FASTR will vastly expand who can build on federally funded research, from a limited few at universities that can afford expensive journal subscriptions to anyone with an internet connection—including American small businesses, many of which are founded by graduate students.

On behalf of more than [number of grad-professional students] graduate students at the [Name of University], we strongly urge you to support FASTR. Thank you kindly for your consideration of this legislation, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional questions or I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Contact info]

1. Economic Impact of the Human Genome Project <http://battelle.org/docs/default-document-library/economic_impact_of_the_human_genome_project.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-0)