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July 14, 2009

Senator John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

On behalf of the Medical Library Association (MLA), we are writing to thank you for introducing S. 1373, "The Federal Research Public Access Act of 2009." The Medical Library Association strongly supports this legislation as public access to health information is vital to a healthy nation and improved research. This expansion of public access will also preserve health information for researchers, students, educators, and the public for generations to come.

The Medical Library Association believes that S. 1373 will enable researchers to realize new discoveries more quickly, encourage a more open exchange of information among the research community, and enhance the affordability and distribution of scientific and scholarly research. As you know, since enactment of the NIH Public Access Policy, thousands of new manuscripts are being made public every month facilitating access by hundreds of thousands of researchers.

MLA maintains that because discovery is an ongoing process, it is critical that the latest information and research be made freely and openly available to scientists, doctors, and the public—a goal that can be accomplished through S 1373. This legislation also will augment the effect of federal dollars through better patient care resulting from increased access to timely clinical and research information.

The Federal Research Public Access Act of 2009 will enhance access to important research currently unavailable to many smaller academic institutions because subscriptions are often cost-prohibitive. We are also pleased to see that like the NIH public access policy, S. 1373 protects the rights of both medical libraries and publishers through the six-month embargo period.

For all of these reasons, we thank you for reintroducing “The Federal Research Public Access Act.” The medical library community stands ready to support your efforts to secure passage of this timely and important legislation. Please let us know if we can provide you with information or offer our support in any way as the legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,



Connie Schardt, AHIP
President



Carla J. Funk, CAE
Executive Director

cc: Senator Joseph Lieberman

Organizational Biography

MLA is a nonprofit, educational organization with more than 4,000 health sciences information professional members worldwide. Founded in 1898, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public.



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