

### Open access to research

Open access to research is one of the most important issues for academic and research librarians. Increased access to federally funded research accelerates the pace of discovery and innovation and fosters economic growth, and it is critical that this new research be readily available to physicians, researchers, and members of the public.

The ALA Washington Office had hoped to see progress in both the House and the Senate related to Open Access, but, while House appropriations legislation on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) included key report language underscoring Congressional oversight to actively monitor participation rates and overall effectiveness of the NIH's Public Access Policy, the Senate deferred action on almost all spending bills until January 2007.

In May 2006, U.S. Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) introduced the "Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006" (FRPAA). The bill, S. 2695, would have required federal agencies that fund more than \$100 million in annual external research to make electronic manuscripts of peer-reviewed journal articles stemming from their research publicly available via the Internet within six months of publication.

At the ALA Annual Conference in June 2006, ALA's Council passed a resolution in support of FRPAA. As the resolution notes, the federal government invests \$55 billion annually in scientific research, with the NIH portion accounting for one third of that, resulting in more than 65,000 journal articles published annually. During tight budgetary

times, this legislation would help ensure all government departments and agencies that invest significant sums in research will achieve a greater return on their and the taxpayers' investment.

Contrary to some claims, S. 2695 was not a threat to journals and the peer review process. FRPAA contained two key provisions that would have protected journals and the peer review process:

- a delay of up to six months in providing access to articles via the public archive (versus immediate access for journal readers), and
- inclusion in the public archive of the author's final manuscript rather than the publisher's formatted, paginated version preferred for citation purposes.

The American Center for Cures Act of 2005, S. 2104, was a related bill whose aim was to speed access to biomedical research. Introduced in December 2005 by Senators Lieberman and Thad Cochran (R-MS) to establish the American Center for Cures within the NIH, the bill would have included a provision that would help to make taxpayer-funded biomedical research available to all potential users.

We anticipate that FRPAA will be reintroduced early in the 110th Congress in the Senate and that there will be a version introduced in the House of Representatives, as well. Please go to ALA's Legislative Action Center ([www.capwiz.com/ala/home](http://www.capwiz.com/ala/home)) to send a message to your Senator, asking him or her to cosponsor bills like this. For further information, please go to the Alliance for Taxpayer Access ([www.taxpayeraccess.org/frpaa/](http://www.taxpayeraccess.org/frpaa/)), a coalition to which ALA belongs and which supports reforms that will make publicly funded research accessible to the public. *zz*

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