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May 3, 2006

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

Senator Joseph Lieberman  
United States Senate  
706 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cornyn and Lieberman:

The Medical Library Association (MLA) supports the Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006. This legislation will improve access to the scientific literature by researchers, students, educators, and the public, and ensure that published information remains available for years to come. Both of these provisions are critical components in support of medical research and discovery, the development of new therapies and treatments, the delivery of high quality effective health care, and greater knowledge and understanding of health issues by the public. We are pleased that your bill provides for both early access and long-term preservation of scientific manuscripts.

While MLA strongly supports the Federal Research Public Access Act, we wish to address some concerns about the potential impact the legislation could have on academic institutions. Institutions will need to develop policies and procedures ensuring faculty compliance with the requirement for submitting their manuscripts into the public repository. This could result in the need for more staff to monitor the process and assist in determining and editing what is the author's version of the manuscript. This could have financial implications as well as impact the integrity of the manuscript.

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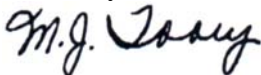
MLA does not believe that having more than one version of a paper is constructive to the conduct of scientific research as last minute corrections are often made to papers right up to the publication deadline. Most authors will not have the final corrected version of their paper. The author's version of the manuscript submitted to a government repository may not contain important corrections and may provide inaccurate information to the public. This has been an issue for NIH, and is one they continue to address in implementation of the NIH Policy on Enhancing Public Access to Archived Publications Resulting from NIH-Funded Research.

Submission of the publisher's final version of the article would solve both issues. It would eliminate most of the administrative and financial burden for institutions since they would not need to ensure that authors have provided a fully edited version. It would also ensure that the final version of record is on deposit with the government and not an incorrect author's manuscript. NIH is currently exploring with publishers the process for submitting the published version of the article. For all these reasons, we encourage you to work with the NIH and members of the NIH Public Access Working Group to address these issues.

If members of the medical library community can provide additional information please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

MLA, a nonprofit, educational organization, comprises health sciences information professionals with more than 4,500 members worldwide. Through its programs and services, 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.J. Tooley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

M.J. Tooley, AHIP, President  
Medical Library Association