

September 27, 2018

Representative Bill Foster  
1224 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Foster,

On behalf of these six national and regional library, publishing, research and advocacy organizations, we are writing in support of H.R. 6501, The Well-Informed, Scientific, and Efficient (WISE) Government Act. Identifying ways to make scientific literature more accessible – and affordable – is in line with the missions of our organizations, and we support the short and long-term solutions that this legislation offers.

Everyday federal employees are tasked with making a myriad of decisions that affect the health and well-being of the American public. We expect that they will have access to the most up-to-date information to inform their decision-making process. Yet, many employees at federal agencies have a harder time accessing the most recent scientific literature, especially in the case of crucial scientific articles, than employees at universities or colleges.

This is often the case because access to journal subscriptions can be prohibitively expensive, with costs for a single title running into the tens of thousands of dollars. And too often, even if an agency does have a subscription to a publication, they are prohibited from sharing it with all of their employees who might need it – especially if they are in a different geographic location. These high costs are compounded by contracts that often include clauses that stop agencies from disclosing how much they are paying for their subscriptions. Agencies have no way to determine if they are getting the best possible price for these materials – or if they are even paying the same price as other agencies.

The WISE Government Act proposes to fix this by prohibiting non-disclosure clauses in federal agency contracts with journal publishers, and provides an avenue for the government to systematically collect and regularly share information on how much each agency is paying for subscriptions to these materials. We believe that taking these steps will provide much-needed transparency in the purchasing process for this information, help the federal government more efficiently steward the investment of taxpayer dollars in these materials, and improve the ability of federal employees to access the most relevant information possible to inform their decision-making process.

Thank you for your leadership in promoting the WISE Government Act. We look forward to working with you on this endeavor, and look forward to working with towards passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

American Library Association  
[www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)  
Gavin Baker, Assistant Director of Government  
Relations

Association of College & Research Libraries  
[www.ala.org/acrl](http://www.ala.org/acrl)  
Mary Ellen Davis, Executive Director

Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions  
[www.sparcopen.org/coapi](http://www.sparcopen.org/coapi)  
Devin Soper, Chair

Electronic Frontier Foundation  
[eff.org](http://eff.org)  
Elliot Harmon, Director of Activism

Public Library of Science  
[www.plos.org](http://www.plos.org)  
Allison Muddit, Chief Executive Officer

SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic  
Resources Coalition)  
[www.sparcopen.org](http://www.sparcopen.org)  
Heather Joseph, Executive Director