

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer:

I am writing on behalf of the Weill Cornell Graduate Student Executive Council to urge you to protect the provision ensuring that taxpayers are guaranteed timely, free access to the results of publicly funded research (Section 2527) in the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (S.1260) during conference negotiations with the House. Section 2527 would codify the current policy established by the 2013 [White House Memorandum on Increasing Public Access to Federally Funded Scientific Research](#) by “directing federal agencies funding more than \$100 million annually in research and development expenditures to provide for free online public access to federally-funded research no later than 12 months after publication in peer-reviewed journals, preferably sooner.” It is imperative that this language is maintained in order to ensure that the public has access to the most timely and cutting-edge information resulting from federally-funded research.

Graduate and professional students are not only vital to the production of peer reviewed publication in their research but also to the larger biomedical research industry. Researchers rely on discourse and resources of other researchers to build their own federally funded projects from proposal to execution. From the research methodology to genetically modified biological models such as mice strains or cell lines, access to peer reviewed research allows scientists to build upon the work already discovered in the field, rather than having to dedicate time, often months, in generating their own biological models similarly as done before as others. As graduate and professional students at Cornell pursuing either a M.S, M.D. or Ph. D, we rely heavily on the access to publications to further our learning and research. Although Weill Cornell has the financial resources to subscribe to major peer-reviewed journals, not all are able to access the research behind a paywall. Researchers should not need to rely on large academic institutions or their own finances to access vital information.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated just how hard it is for researchers, physicians, and public health experts to use research behind a paywall. At the start of the pandemic, one of the first actions policymakers (including the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy) took was to ask publishers to make all coronavirus-related journal articles openly available to accelerate our understanding of the virus. The resulting [database of open access articles](#) has been a tremendous asset to researchers, and has been accessed more than *275 million times* since its launch. The demand - and value - of these articles to the research community and the public is clear. We should ensure that all U.S. taxpayer-funded research on other diseases and pressing societal issues like climate change is readily available.

Despite the success of the open access database for COVID-related research, the majority of taxpayer-funded research outputs are still locked behind publisher paywalls or inaccessible in proprietary databases, stifling the broad dissemination of knowledge and our ability to innovate for the public good. The language on open access in Section 2527 of S. 1260 is a crucial step towards making taxpayer-funded research readily available and fully usable by scientists and the public alike.

We were pleased to see the Senate support the language on open access when it passed S. 1260 and urge you to maintain this language in the final bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jinnie Kim', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Jinnie Kim
Weill Cornell Medicine Ph.D Candidate
President of Graduate Student Executive Council