



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL
STUDENTS

February 28, 2022

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 2051

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

I write on behalf of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS), representing the graduate-professional student governments of 52 institutions across the United States, to express our strong support for language concerning public access to taxpayer-funded research (Section 2527) in S.1260: United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021. This key section directs federal agencies to provide public access to federally-funded research no later than 12 month after publication in a peer-reviewed journal, preferably sooner.

As students, educators, and researchers, we need open access to articles reporting on research funded by US federal science agencies. This research, paid for by taxpayers like us, is rarely accessible to the public due to the exorbitant cost of journal subscriptions, yet the information in these articles provides the necessary foundation for current and future research that benefits the public directly. By ensuring that this public access language is included in the final legislation, we can ensure that students, educators, and researchers have access to the research they need to advance critical research to mitigate climate change, solve complex medical puzzles which unlock the cure to diseases, send our rockets to the moon, and far more.

One example of the power of full and immediate access to articles, data, and research is the rapid development of the COVID-19 vaccines. At a moment when humanity needed it most, doors were opened to public and private sector researchers who created vaccines that continue to save millions of lives around the globe. At the request of the White House and Office of Science & Technology Policy, journal publishers agreed to lift their paywalls and provide the public with immediate and free access to coronavirus-related journal articles. 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. Open access to journal articles is needed not just for COVID-19, but for all the diseases and challenges we face.

Now, imagine a world in which all publicly funded research is treated the same as we treated Covid research. Barriers to successfully developing technology on climate change, disease cures, and more would be at the fingertips of researchers ready and willing to bring humanity into an informational age. The same science that put a man on the moon, powers your smartphone and turns on the electricity to your building is the same science that is locked behind paywalls for almost all researchers, preventing advancement, unless you belong to a well funded higher education institution. Whether it's NASA developing the next research station on Mars or tackling climate mitigation, lawmakers could have research developed years ahead of our current trajectory simply by removing these paywalls.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL
STUDENTS

Furthermore, by improving access to federally funded research for all, Section 2527 represents an important step in leveling the playing field between large, well-funded institutions and the less well-funded institutions which educate the majority of American students. By providing better access to researchers outside of the most prestigious universities, the change will expand the number of experts who can contribute to addressing our most pressing challenges.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to ***maintain the public access language in Section 2527 of the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA)*** during conference negotiations with the House.

Sincerely,

Rock Aboujaoude Jr.

Thad Potter

DOLA, NAGPS

President, NAGPS

CC: House and Senate Conference Committee Members on S. 1260 and H.R. 4521