



1333 New Hampshire Ave, Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20036
(202) 630-5090 • www.sparcopen.org

December 10th, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chair
Appropriations Committee
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Ranking
Member
Appropriations Committee
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chair
Appropriations Committee
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking
Member
Appropriations Committee
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Moore Capito, Senator Baldwin, Representative Aderhold and Representative DeLauro:

On behalf of SPARC, an organization of college and university libraries across the U.S. dedicated to supporting public access to federally funded research, I respectfully write to urge the inclusion of language in the final bill that provides essential stability for institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations by prohibiting unilateral changes to indirect cost rates—also known as facilities and administration (F&A) rates—for National Institutes of Health grants and contracts.

Section 224 of the Senate version of the Labor, Health and Human Services bill provides essential stability for institutions of higher education and nonprofit organizations by prohibiting unilateral changes to indirect cost rates for National Institutes of Health grants and contracts. This protection requires NIH to continue applying indirect cost provisions as they existed in the third quarter of fiscal year 2017 and prohibits the Department of Health and Human Services from implementing any modified approach to those provisions.

Indirect costs support critical research infrastructure that enables public access to scholarship and advances scientific discovery. They fund library resources, digital repositories, research administration offices, and other essential systems that ensure federally funded research can be properly conducted, disseminated, and preserved for public benefit. Arbitrary or sudden changes to these rates without adequate planning and institutional input would destabilize university budgets, disrupt ongoing research programs, and undermine access to the research resources necessary to realize the full benefits of federal research investments.

Section 224 maintains the status quo on indirect cost rates by requiring NIH to continue applying provisions as they existed in 2017 and prohibiting HHS from developing or implementing any modified approach to those provisions. This prevents unilateral administrative changes to F&A rates. The Senate Committee's report language appropriately looks forward to reviewing proposals to develop and implement an optimized, new government-wide model for indirect costs reimbursement developed in collaboration with the community and stakeholders. Section 224 in combination with the report language ensures that any such changes occur through a deliberative process with adequate institutional input and transition time.

We urge continued inclusion of the protective language contained in Section 224. Our community stands ready to work constructively with Congress and the Department of Health and Human Services on this important matter.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information or address any questions you may have regarding this provision.

Respectfully,

Corinna Turbes
Senior Manager, Government Affairs
corinna@sparcopen.org
952-270-0986