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Publishers Applaud “Research Works Act,” Bipartisan Legislation To End Government Mandates on Private-Sector Scholarly Publishing

Friday, 23 December 2011 | Andi Sporkin

Washington, DC; December 23, 2011— The Association of American Publishers (AAP) and its Professional and Scholarly Division (PSP) welcomed the introduction of the bipartisan [Research Works Act, H.R. 3699](#) as significant legislation that will help reinforce America’s leadership in scholarly and scientific publishing in the public interest and in the critical peer-review system that safeguards the quality of such research.

H.R. 3699 was introduced by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Committee member Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY).

The legislation is aimed at preventing regulatory interference with private-sector research publishers in the production, peer review and publication of scientific, medical, technical, humanities, legal and scholarly journal articles. This sector represents tens of thousands of articles which report on, analyze and interpret original research; more than 30,000 U.S. workers; and millions of dollars invested by publishers in staff, editorial, technological, capital and operational funding of independent peer review by specialized experts. **North American-based science journal publishers alone account for 45% of all peer-reviewed papers published annually for researchers worldwide.**

“The professional and scholarly publishing community thanks Representatives Issa and Maloney for supporting their significant investments that fund innovations and enable the essential peer-review process maintaining the high standards of U.S. scientific research,” said Tom Allen, President and CEO, Association of American Publishers.

“America’s PSP publishers are making more research information available to more people, through more channels, than ever before in our history. At a time when job retention, U.S. exports, scholarly excellence, scientific integrity and digital copyright protection are all priorities, the **Research Works Act ensures the sustainability of this industry.**”

The Research Works Act will prohibit federal agencies from unauthorized free public dissemination of journal articles that report on research which, to some degree, has been federally-funded but is produced and published by private sector publishers receiving no such funding. It would also prevent non-government authors from being required to agree to such free distribution of these works. Additionally, it would **preempt federal agencies’ planned funding, development and back-office administration of their own electronic repositories** for such works, which would duplicate existing copyright-protected systems and unfairly compete with established university, society and commercial publishers.

Publishers support reasonable efforts by the federal government to make the results of publicly-funded research widely available without mandates; these include the statutory directives to guarantee broad access in the [America COMPETES Act \(PDF\)](#). There has been ongoing dialogue between publishers and Executive Branch officials at the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Department of Energy and National Science Foundation to find solutions for broad dissemination of research results without weakening incentives for investments in private-sector research works.

Journal articles are widely available in major academic centers, public libraries, universities, interlibrary loan programs and online databases. Many academic, professional and business organizations provide staffs and members with access to such content.

More information about the impact of federal regulations on professional and scholarly publishing can be found at <http://publishers.org/issues/5/9/>

About AAP and PSP

Members of the Association of American Publishers’ Professional and Scholarly Publishing Division (PSP) publish, in print and electronic form, the vast majority of materials produced and used by scholars and professionals worldwide in science, medicine, technology, business, law and the humanities. Division members produce books, journals, computer software, databases and digital content. Its membership encompasses commercial publishing companies, professional societies and university presses.

The Association of American Publishers (AAP) is the national trade association representing nearly 300 premier U.S. publishers of high-quality entertainment, education, professional and scholarly content, produced using the most current technology, reaching the world. More information about PSP and AAP is available at www.publishers.org

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