



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

September 15, 2006

The Honorable Michael Doyle  
United States House of Representatives  
401 Cannon Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6250

Dear Rep. Doyle:

On behalf of the American Psychological Association (APA), I am writing to express grave concern about any amendment to the NIH Reauthorization bill that would require that nonprofit publishers, such as APA, make many of the articles we publish freely available six months after they are accepted for publication. I understand that you are considering offering such an amendment, and am writing to urge you to reconsider.

Enactment of this type of amendment would harm science in many ways, first by gutting the 'quality control' processes in scientific journals. Many scientific publishers, including APA, do not recoup the costs of publication within a six month window. Although federal funds may support – in whole or in part – the research reported in some journal articles, the federal government does not (and we contend, should not) pay for the editorial processes that lead to the publication of that research. Important services are necessary to ensure the publication of accurate scientific information: peer review, copyediting, formatting, printing for distribution, and publishing on-line. These services represent a substantial private sector investment that results in prompt access to research results and the reliable archiving of articles at no additional cost to the public.

Another unintended consequence of open access policies that ignore the marketing needs of existing scientific publishers is that many publications are only marginally self-sufficient, and will likely go out of business. This will decrease the number of articles, and thus the scientific knowledge that is made available to the public. Between 35 and 50 percent of scientific journals could be forced out of operation within 3-5 years if a six-month open access rule is imposed. If scientists cannot publish their work, the results are never made available to the public or practitioners.

APA supports the goal of increasing access to research publications. It is important to keep in mind, however, that there are many ways to do that besides the one your amendment would promote. For example, APA has a considerable investment in making information available to the public via our website and other free publications. In addition, APA publishes some journals for practitioners that are intended to translate scientific findings to the clinic. APA- published articles are available online in public libraries for less than \$2 each.

On behalf of APA, I urge you not to offer an open access amendment to the NIH Reauthorization bill in the waning days of this Congress. This is a precipitous move with enormous potential consequences. There have been no hearings held on the issue. There is too little time this year to ensure that a mandatory six-month open access policy will not impose burdens on scientific publishing that will damage U.S. science and erode our competitive advantage in research and development. I urge you to work with not-for-profit scientific publishers to ensure that your legislation will advance, and not hinder, the prompt dissemination of accurate scientific research results while enabling society journals to continue to provide their important services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Breckler". The signature is written in a cursive style. To the right of the signature is a vertical red line.

Steven J. Breckler, PhD  
Executive Director for Science