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Statement From IssueLab on the Federal Research Public Access Act

The 2009 Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA; S.1373) is legislation that would extend, improve, and make more permanent an earlier open access initiative involving research funded by the National Institute of Health.

The new legislation would require that any federal agency with a budget of \$100,000,000 or more earmarked for extramural research develop a policy on public access to publicly funded research. Among other things, the legislation would require government funded research papers to be made available in publicly accessible Internet archives within six months of publication in a peer reviewed journal, and would ensure the long-term preservation of, and free public access to, the published research finding in a stable digital repository.

Being an open access archive of social policy research, IssueLab is very much in support of the FRPAA. Social policy research, just like scientific, technological, and medical research, builds on past attempts to dissect, understand, prescribe, evaluate, and ultimately share newly generated knowledge, which in turn starts the process of furthering knowledge all over again. Mandates such as the FRPAA encourage and strengthen this process.

The Internet now provides an unprecedented opportunity to amplify and disseminate the results of publicly funded research by making it more widely and easily available than ever before. Improving access to these findings will help researchers from all backgrounds, including those at nonprofit organizations who work toward solutions to social ills, build on past findings, accelerating innovation that can improve countless lives.

Access to many of the papers created with the support of public funding requires expensive subscriptions and many are never placed online. Congress must ensure that the public, having invested in this knowledge generation, gets access to publicly funded publications and that research findings are easily available not only to scientists, medical researchers, physicians, students and patients, but also to nonprofit organizations, journalists, policy analysts, legislators, students, activists, and grant makers who all rely on research to effectively address complex social issues.

As an organization concerned with access to knowledge and a fair return on public investment in the creation of knowledge, we are pleased to be part of a broad coalition, including hundreds of consumers, academics, librarians, students and many other stakeholders that have expressed their support for the Public Access Act, in order to ensure barrier-free access to taxpayer-funded research (See coalition at: <http://www.taxpayeraccess.org/member.html>).