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September 10, 2008

The Honorable John Conyers Jr.
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conyers:

The Association of American Universities (AAU) is an association that includes 60 leading public and private U.S. research institutions. AAU focuses on issues important to research intensive universities, such as funding for research and scholarship, science policy, and graduate education. Research universities discover, create and disseminate new knowledge and scholarship for the benefit of society.

On behalf of its member university presidents and chancellors, AAU has repeatedly endorsed NIH's efforts to expand public access to the results of NIH-funded research through the implementation of PubMed Central. As your Committee hears testimony from NIH Director Elias Zerhouni and other witnesses on NIH's public access policy, I would like to reaffirm AAU's strong support for that policy. When voluntary participation in PubMed Central failed to achieve a substantial volume of submissions, AAU supported the decision by Congress to make submissions mandatory. We share NIH's view that PubMed Central must be implemented in a manner that does not constitute a threat to scientific journal publishers, and we believe that the 12-month embargo period between the publication of an article in a scientific journal and the appearance of the accepted manuscript in PubMed Central provides the necessary protection to journal publishers.

NIH's Policy on Enhancing Public Access to Archived Publications Resulting from NIH-Funded Research will promote the goal of sharing as broadly as possible the new knowledge made possible by the American people's investment in university research.

Sincerely,

John C. Vaughn
Executive Vice President

Cc: House Committee on the Judiciary