

November 17, 2025

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Smith,

On behalf of the Association of American Publishers (AAP) and the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM), we write to express concerns about the Securing American Funding and Expertise from Adversarial Research Exploitation (SAFE Research) Act of 2025, included as an amendment in the House-passed version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Counter to the Committee's goals and the balanced approach taken by Congress in previous research security legislative efforts, the SAFE Research Act would reduce American leadership and competitiveness in research and innovation.

We strongly share the Committee's goal of safeguarding the security and integrity of the U.S. research enterprise. However, as organizations representing the publishers, editors, and disseminators of the scientific record, as well as practicing researchers and scientists, we believe the provisions of the SAFE Research Act would inadvertently undermine our nation's security and prosperity by restricting international research collaboration and damaging the transparent exchange of knowledge upon which scientific and economic progress depends.

As noted by the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) [in their joint letter](#), the SAFE Research Act conflicts with the fundamental principles of open scientific inquiry, as well as the innovation that is the lifeblood of our modern economy. Specifically, the legislation treats co-publication in peer-reviewed journals as presumptive evidence of research collaboration with "hostile foreign entities," which would penalize federally funded researchers for legitimate scholarly communication and citation practices—including literature reviews, co-authorships that arise from data sharing, or acknowledgment of prior work. Such a framework would be chilling for even innocuous reference to foreign researchers and conflicts with standard practices of authorship and collaboration within the research and publishing processes. The SAFE Acts overbroad designations of research collaboration threaten to chill US participation in broad international research efforts with bipartisan support, such as cancer research, fusion energy, and quantum computing.

Scientific communication is international by nature. Rigorous peer review, publication, and citation ensure transparency, reproducibility, and accountability, and are aligned with the Executive Order on Restoring Gold Standard Science. The trackable, open, and public nature of scientific publishing—far from being a vulnerability—serves as a bulwark of trust and traceability in global research.

The Department of War itself has cautioned that “attempts to constrain the open research environment are likely to be counterproductive to the DoD mission, in that the benefits derived from participation in the open research environment by DoD-funded research are substantial.”

Preventing researchers from co-authoring, referencing, or presenting work with international counterparts would fragment the research ecosystem, stifle innovation, and isolate U.S. science from global developments. Indeed, the SAFE Act could lock U.S. researchers out of critical collaborations necessary to develop new technologies and systems to counter the enemies seeking to harm our nation.

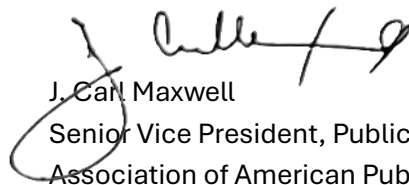
We respectfully urge the Committees to remove the SAFE Research Act provisions from any final NDAA text. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the committee and congressional offices on matters related to research publishing practices—such as the distinctions between co-authorship, citation, and data use to ensure continued American dominance in technology and innovation. We believe scientific publishers can serve as an important resource for policy makers to understand the critical role scholarly journals and publishers play in the transparent communication of research.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and for your continued support of policies that sustain both research security and the free exchange of scientific knowledge.

Sincerely,



David Weinreich
Director, Policy and Government Relations
STM



J. Carl Maxwell
Senior Vice President, Public Policy
Association of American Publishers