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Statement on Declined Litigation in False Claims Act Lawsuit Against Four Largest Academic Publishers

Federal agencies have long required that research paid for by American taxpayers be freely available online. We intend to litigate a False Claims Act lawsuit against the four largest academic publishers — Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley and Informa — that alleges that they responded to that mandate by causing charges to federal grants roughly ten times what it actually costs them to process an article and put it online, and by writing copyright terms that foreclose cheaper, equally effective ways of delivering public access. The U.S. False Claims Act allows a private person, a Relator, to file a lawsuit to recover money for the Government. The Relator here is Juan Pablo Alperin, an established expert on the academic publishing business. On March 11, 2024, his Counsel, Eugenie Reich and John R. Thomas, filed a case under seal on his behalf. The U.S. government declined to intervene in the case on July 23, 2026. The Court [ordered](#) the case unsealed and served on the Defendants on July 24, 2026, and made this [Complaint](#) public on July 30, 2026.

Research grants are an investment of public funds into public knowledge. Every dollar overcharged is a dollar that does not reach a laboratory bench, a graduate student, or otherwise never supports the discovery a community is waiting for. Dr. Alperin is a leading expert of scholarly communication who has spent his career studying how research reaches the public, and dismantling barriers that decide whose knowledge counts and who can use it. He has pursued this work through peer-reviewed research, through building open-source publishing systems, and by taking on leadership roles shaping scholarly practices. He brought this action as a further effort towards the same goals. During the litigation, Dr. Alperin remains available for engagement on his scholarly activities, with contact information below.

Nothing in this Complaint challenges peer review, the value of scientific publishing, or the public access policies themselves. This case does not question whether the government should fund science or make its results public; it takes both as given. What it challenges are pricing and contract terms that, the Complaint alleges, caused unreasonable and unnecessary charges to the government, and that were set to undermine the transparency public access policies require. The relief sought is recovery for the United States and a functioning, transparent market for public access—so that federal science funding reaches the science and the public it was meant to benefit.

For further questions on the contents of the Complaint or False Claims Act procedures generally, contact Counsel, as listed below.

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