



Secular Maryland

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SB 560 - SUPPORT

Animal Testing and Research - Human-Relevant Research Funding and Animal Testing and Research Licensure

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Secular Maryland supports this bill which would confer better protection for animals against unnecessary reliance on animals for medical and product testing and research. This bill promotes the development and use of alternatives to animal testing. Current state law lacks consideration for the potential of animals to be harmed. Scientific research has revealed that humans are more similar to our non-human animal counterparts than some people may want to believe. The provisions in this bill strike a sensible balance between the potential harms and benefits from medical and product testing and research on animals. One concern with this bill is that information on testing with animals that must be reported may nevertheless need to be kept under wraps because of the potential for researchers to be threatened by extreme animal rights activists acting outside the law in an effort to shut down all animal testing.

In 2000, California became the first state to pass a law limiting the use of animals in product testing. Specifically, it made it unlawful for a manufacturer or contract testing facility to use animals when an appropriate, non-animal, alternative test method has been validated for use by the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM). Read California's law (Section 1834.9). In 2007 and 2008 respectively, New Jersey and New York became the second and third states to pass such legislation

The Animal Welfare Act is a federal law that sets minimal standards for the treatment of certain warm-blooded animals used in experiments. The law also requires that unannounced inspections of all regulated research facilities are carried out annually. In

addition to purpose-bred mice and rats, animals such as crabs, fish, frogs, octopuses and turtles as well as purpose-bred birds are not covered by the Animal Welfare Act. The failure to protect these animals under the law means that there is no oversight or scrutiny of their treatment and use in the laboratory. And, because these animals are not counted, no one knows how many of them are suffering in laboratories. It also means that facilities using unprotected species in experiments are not required to search for alternative, non-animal methods that could be used to replace or reduce harmful experiments that use animals.

Respectfully,
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