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**Bill: SB 535**

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Position: Support**

Date: February 25, 2025

Dear Chairman Feldman,

Thank you very much to you and the members of the Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment for welcoming testimony on SB 535. My name is Sherman McFarland, and I am the Director of Policy for the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS). AAVS's mission is to end the use of animals in science through education, advocacy, and the development of alternative methods. Since 1883, we have been monitoring the use of animals in science including progress in alternatives. On behalf of our members and supporters, including those in Maryland, I am submitting written testimony in support of SB 535 because of our concern for animals who suffer in research labs. You may be aware that research and testing facilities that only use species excluded from the federal Animal Welfare Act are not currently subject to federal inspections. SB 535 will provide a remedy by requiring all private research and testing facilities in Maryland, and all species of animals kept in these facilities, to be subject to inspection by the State Inspector of Animal Welfare within the state Department of Agriculture.

SB 535 requires that private research and testing facilities in Maryland that use live animals in research, education, experimentation, or testing must be licensed by the state Department of Agriculture. The bill will also create an Animals in Research Fund, which will cover the costs associated with the duties of the State Inspector of Animal Welfare. The State Inspector of Animal Welfare would operate within the Maryland Department of Agriculture and be required to inspect each private research and testing facility applying for a license. The State Inspector of Animal Welfare would also be required to inspect each private research and testing facility that has an active license. Additionally, SB 535 has an enforcement mechanism because it levies monetary penalties against private research and testing facilities that violate the provisions of the bill.

In addition, SB 535 requires schools or institutions of higher education that use animals in research, education, experimentation, or testing to annually report the results of any inspection of the school or institution of higher education performed by the agency that regulates the use of animals by the school or institution. Schools and institutions of higher education would also be required to report any violations found during these inspections and to file these annual reports on or before December 31.

AAVS strongly encourages the Committee to vote in favor of SB 535 because it represents a great, humane step forward for Maryland. Thank you very much for allowing me to testify in support of

Chairman Feldman

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SB 535. If you or any member of the Committee has questions about my testimony, or needs more information, please contact me via email at [smcfarland@aavs.org](mailto:smcfarland@aavs.org)

Sincerely,

Sherman McFarland

Director of Policy