



Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States

1255 23rd St. NW, Suite 450
Washington, DC 20037
202-452-1100
humaneworld.org

Testimony in Support of SB 537
Presented to the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
February 27, 2025
By Kathleen Conlee, Vice President, Animal Research Issues
Humane World for Animals

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony on behalf of Humane World for Animals, formerly called the Humane Society of the United States, and our Maryland members and supporters urging a favorable report of SB 537. This important legislation creates a requirement that animal research and testing facilities in the state annually report to the Secretary of Agriculture how many dogs and cats they use and how many are provided the chance of adoption after they are no longer needed for experiments.

SB 537 would be a simple update to current law,¹ which requires research and testing facilities to offer dogs and cats that are no longer needed for research and testing purposes to animal rescue organizations or facilitate the adoption of these animals via a private, internal adoption program. While current law provides dogs and cats this second chance to live as beloved pets, it does not require transparency of whether research and testing facilities are compliant. This means that facilities can state that they are adopting out eligible animals but are not currently responsible for validating those claims. According to the most recent data available from the United States Department of Agriculture, approximately 350 dogs and 20 cats were used in Maryland research and testing facilities that would be required to comply with this legislation. However, the percentage of those animals that were adopted out is unknown.

SB 537 would help ensure that the maximum number of dogs and cats suitable for adoption are being given that chance by creating accountability through reporting very basic information. Requiring research and testing facilities to be accountable for reporting how many adoptions they facilitate will incentivize them to adopt out as many eligible animals as possible, which is what the current law intends. If facilities are already complying with current law, then it should be very easy for them to record and report this basic data once per year. Dogs and cats used for research and testing in our state deserve this minimal extra effort.

Maryland would not be alone in passing this commonsense legislation. In 2019, Oregon passed legislation to not only require dogs and cats be given the chance of adoption after their time in the laboratory, but also to ensure laboratories report how many of those animals are adopted

¹ Md. Code Ann., Agriculture § 15-101 (2018).



1255 23rd St. NW, Suite 450
Washington, DC 20037
202-452-1100
humaneworld.org

Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States

each year.² By passing SB 537, our state has the opportunity to both align with Oregon and be a leader on this issue.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony. Humane World for Animals urges a favorable report on SB 537.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Conlee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Conlee
Vice President, Animal Research Issues
Humane World for Animals

² ORS § 609.410 (2019).