

MD SB 537_FAVORABLE_Conlee Humane World.pdf

Uploaded by: Kathleen Conlee

Position: FAV



Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States

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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).



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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).

KH-EEE-HB0537.pdf

Uploaded by: Kimberly Hayes

Position: FAV

Testimony on HB 0537 - Favorable
HB 0537 – Research Facilities and Animal Testing – Adoption and Reporting
Requirements

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 27, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Brian Feldman, Vice Chair Cheryl Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Kim Hayes, resident of Frederick MD, offers a **favorable** testimony in support of **HB 0537 – Research Facilities and Animal Testing – Adoption and Reporting Requirements**

I am in full support of any measure of improvement which this bill provides to animals in research and testing facilities and schools. As an animal lover, I don't believe we should be testing on animals at all, but within the current context, I believe they should operate in every way with transparency and lawfulness.

I (Kim Hayes) urge the committee to provide a favorable report on HB 0537.

Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Us

Uploaded by: Lisa Radov

Position: FAV



MARYLAND VOTES FOR ANIMALS

PO Box 10411
BALTIMORE, MD 21209

February 27, 2025

To: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

From: Lisa Radov, President and Chair, Maryland Votes for Animals, Inc.

Re: Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals - Adoption and Reporting Requirements – SB 537 – Support

Chair Feldman, Vice - Chair Kagan, members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Lisa Radov. I am the President and Chair of Maryland Votes for Animals. We champion humane legislation to improve the lives of animals in Maryland. Speaking for Maryland Votes for Animals, our Board of Directors, and our members across Maryland, I respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee vote favorably for Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals - Adoption and Reporting Requirements– SB 537

Applying certain provisions of law regarding the adoption of dogs and cats used for scientific research purposes to testing facilities; requiring certain research facilities and testing facilities to submit to the Department of Agriculture certain information regarding dogs and cats on or before January 31 each year; and requiring a school or an institution of higher education that uses animals for certain purposes to submit a report on the results of certain inspections to the General Assembly on or before December 31 each year.

This bill is an update to the very popular “Beagle Bill” also known as “Beagle Freedom Act” Maryland State legislators passed overwhelmingly in 2018. The goal of that legislation was to allow healthy dogs and cats used in research who had paid their debt to society to be adopted by a loving family. The only problem with that bill was that it did not have any mechanisms to ensure that best practices were being followed regarding the goals of that law.

What this bill does is simply hold those institutions conducting research on cats and dogs accountable by submitting information to the Maryland Department of Agriculture. This would include the number of cats and dogs owned and used by the research facility and the number of dogs and cats released to animal rescue organizations after testing has concluded and the names of those animal rescue organizations and that such information about the compliance with that law is available on the Department of Agriculture website. Any school or an institution of higher education that conducts research on animals would submit a report on the results of inspections by the Department of Agriculture to the General Assembly on or before December 31 each year.

The goal of this bill is to ensure that our research institutions, testing facilities, and institutes of higher education are allowing as many healthy dogs and cats, who have endured so much suffering in these experiments, to finally be adopted into loving homes.

In closing, I would like to thank Senator Kramer for his sponsorship of SB 537 and ask the committee to give this bill a favorable report.

SB 537 FAVORABLE - American Anti-Vivisection Socie

Uploaded by: Sherman McFarland

Position: FAV



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Suite 204
Jenkintown, PA 19046-1611
Phone: 215.887.0816
Fax: 215.887.2088
Web: www.aavs.org

Bill: SB 537

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 537. 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 537 because this legislation will require all research and testing facilities in the state to: (1) annually report the number of dogs and cats they owned and used in research, education, or testing; and (2) annually report the number of dogs and cats they released to animal rescue organizations for adoptions. By including a reporting requirement, SB 537 will allow the State of Maryland to understand how many dogs and cats are used each year in research, education, and testing by research and testing facilities, and whether facilities are complying with the current law to place into adoption dogs and cats no longer to be used in research.

As stated above, SB 537 requires that every research and testing facility in Maryland that uses live animals in research, education, or testing shall report to the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture the following information about the preceding 12-month period: (1) the number of dogs or cats owned and used by the research or testing facility; and (2) the number of dogs or cats released to animal rescue organizations and the names of the animal rescue organizations to which the dogs and cats were released. Research and testing facilities in Maryland would be required to report this information to the state Secretary of Agriculture each year on or before January 31. The Maryland Secretary of Agriculture would then collect this information reported by research and testing facilities, prepare an annual report of the information, and post it on the state Department of Agriculture's website. SB 537 also has an enforcement mechanism because it levies monetary penalties against research and testing facilities that violate the provisions of the bill.

In addition, SB 537 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 Department of Agriculture. Schools and

Chairman Feldman

Page 2

February 25, 2025

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 537 because it will allow Maryland to understand the fate of dogs and cats used in research and testing in our state. Thank you very much for allowing me to testify in support of SB 537. 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.

Sincerely,

Sherman McFarland

Director of Policy

NABR MD SB537 FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Brandon Morton

Position: UNF



National Association for BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West-Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman:

The National Association for Biomedical Research (NABR) is writing in opposition to SB 537, Testing Facilities That Use Animals – Adoption and Reporting Requirements.

This bill proposes to require research facilities to establish an adoption program for retired dogs and cats used in research through a private placement process or a collaborative agreement with a listed “animal rescue organization.” In addition, it would require research and testing facilities to submit to the Department of Agriculture certain information regarding dogs and cats on or before a certain date each year; and require a school or an institution of higher education that uses animals for certain purposes to submit a report on the results of certain inspections to the General Assembly on or before a certain date each year.

For more than 46 years, NABR has been the nation’s only organization solely dedicated to advocating for sound public policy in support of ethical and essential laboratory animal research and the lifesaving discoveries they produce. NABR’s diverse and unified membership includes more than 330 universities, medical and veterinary schools, teaching hospitals, pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, patient groups and academic and professional societies that rely on humane and responsible animal research to advance global human and animal health.

Animal research remains vital to our nation’s mission to understand disease, discover targeted therapies, alleviate suffering, and improve and increase the quality of life. Biomedical research projects involving animals are governed by a strict structure of laws, regulations and guidelines and continue to yield invaluable data in the process of discovering new therapies to treat, cure and prevent disease.

This legislation is superfluous as biomedical research facilities involving animals are already governed by a strict structure of laws, regulations and guidelines and continue to yield invaluable data in the process of discovering new therapies to treat, cure and prevent disease. As written, this bill would add additional, unnecessary administrative burden to researchers and institutions in the state of Maryland. Not only that, this legislation could literally fine scientists conducting basic research in the state of Maryland.

We urge the committee to unfavorably report SB 537, so Maryland research facilities can continue to create lifesaving treatments for diseases, discover targeted therapies, alleviate suffering, and improve and increase the quality of life for both humans and animals. Should you or your staff have questions please contact Brandon Morton, NABR’s Vice President of Government Affairs via email at bmorton@nabr.org.

Sincerely,

Matthew R. Bailey
President

NABR MD SB537 FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Matthew Bailey

Position: UNF



National Association for BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West-Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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Sincerely,

Matthew R. Bailey
President

SB 537 - Johns Hopkins - Oppose.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Huber

Position: UNF

TO: The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
*Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee*

FROM: Michael Huber
Director, Maryland Government Affairs

SB537
Unfavorable

DATE: February 27, 2025

RE: SB537 Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals - Adoption and Reporting Requirements

Johns Hopkins opposes **SB537 Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals - Adoption and Reporting Requirements**. This bill requires research and testing facilities in the state to report annually to the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture. The report must state the number of dogs or cats owned and used by the facility and the number of dogs or cats released to animal rescue organizations. The Department will then aggregate this data for an annual, public report. This bill requires institutions of higher education that use animals in research or testing would have to report to the General Assembly on the results of any inspection by the Department of Agriculture, including any violations.

As the leading research institution in the state, Johns Hopkins University & Medicine takes seriously its mission to improve the health of the community and the world by setting the standard of excellence in medical education, research, and clinical care. The use of animals is essential to the success of our mission.

Almost every medical advancement – from COVID-19 vaccines, insulin therapy for diabetes, treatments for cardiovascular diseases, cancer therapy to organ transplants – are the direct result of research performed on animals. Simply put, modern medicine, as we understand it today, would not exist without research performed in animals.

For example, The State of Maryland played a key role in the development of COVID-19 vaccines. Beginning five years ago, as COVID-19 initially spread world-wide, institutions, including Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, and private companies, rapidly ramped up research to develop new ways to treat and prevent COVID-19. The vaccines and therapeutics developed by biomedical researchers during this time were tested on animals before human trials as an integral part of development. Different kinds of institutions and facilities contributed to this effort, leading to widely available COVID-19 vaccines in an unexpectedly short time. These efforts were central to containing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research facilities are subject to extensive oversight by multiple federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health – Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The reports generated from that oversight are publicly available. As such, this bill is unnecessary.

For the reasons stated above, we urge an UNFAVORABLE committee report on **Senate Bill 537**.

PSBR Letter SB 537 - Final.pdf

Uploaded by: Tom Leach

Position: UNF

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West-Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman:

The Pennsylvania Society for Biomedical Research (PSBR) opposes Senate Bill No. 537 - *Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals – Adoption and Reporting Requirements*, which would, among other provisions, require research facilities and testing facilities to submit to the Department of Agriculture certain information regarding dogs and cats on or before a certain date each year; and require a school or an institution of higher education that uses animals for certain purposes to submit a report on the results of certain inspections to the General Assembly on or before a certain date each year.

First, we should note that PSBR and its members fully support the re-homing of laboratory animals. Without exception, research institutions in Maryland have policies and procedures in place to re-home animals when their time in research is complete. Most often, these animals are re-homed with individuals, including the employees who care for the animals each day. Adding additional regulatory requirements will not change this fact and only further complicates animal re-homings without taking into consideration the best interests of the animals.

Importantly, the reporting requirements in this legislation would create significant issues for the research community. In some cases, the information is duplicative of reporting already publicly accessible at the federal level. Specifically, institutions already report annually the number and species of animals used in research and similar details are also reported in each inspection report. As a whole, the reporting required by the federal government is so significant that legislation and regulations were specifically developed to seek ways to reduce administrative burdens.

Equally important, the individuals and organizations who receive re-homed animals are kept anonymous and are subject to re-homing agreements that are confidential to protect both their own privacy and the animals placed with these individuals or organizations. There are well-documented incidents of harassment and intimidation by anti-research activists against those who assist in the re-homing of research animals. To be clear, the names of organizations and the individuals with whom animals are re-homed should remain private.

In summary, PSBR believes strongly that this legislation unnecessarily seeks to further regulate an already highly regulated research community, which could increase the cost, both in time and resources, of advancing research and science in Maryland. It also makes the state “unfriendly” to research that requires animal models and could drive away the best and brightest researchers to institutions located in other jurisdictions, as well as lead to the investment of research and development in locations. This legislation would make Maryland a less acceptable jurisdiction for research in a time when domestic research is critical and in need of promotion.

Thank you for considering our views on this important issue.

Pennsylvania Society for Biomedical Research

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Leach".

Thomas A. Leach
Executive Director