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Bill: HB 1448

Committee: House Committee on Health and Government Operations

Position: Favorable

Date: March 6, 2025

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk,

On behalf of our members and supporters, including those in Maryland, thank you for allowing our organization to share our thoughts on HB 1448. Founded in 1883, the American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) is the first non-profit animal advocacy and educational organization in the United States dedicated to ending the use of animals in research, testing, and education. Part of our mission is to end the use of animals in testing by promoting better, more modern test methods.

We are writing to support HB 1448 as presented because it will reduce animal suffering and help Maryland continue its leadership in scientific research by ensuring the use of newer, more accurate test methods in place of painful and unnecessary animal tests.

Animal Testing Often Fails; Better Alternatives Exist

One of the biggest problems with animal testing is that it often provides unreliable results. Approximately 90% of drugs that seem safe in animal tests fail during human trials. In many cases, this happens because animal tests do not show the real risks or benefits to humans.

Fortunately, newer, non-animal test methods exist that are more reliable because they are based on human biology instead of animals. In fact, Maryland has been leading the way in this field since 2023, when it established the Human-Relevant Research Fund, the first law of its kind in the country, which helps scientists develop these modern, non-animal test methods.

Making Sure Non-Animal Test Methods Are Used Whenever Possible

Right now, research facilities are allowed to use animals even when a non-animal test method has been approved by government agencies. HB 1448 will fix this by requiring all research facilities in Maryland to use non-animal test methods when they are approved. In particular, the bill makes sure that:

- If the relevant federal or state agency has approved a non-animal test method, research facilities will be required to use it instead of an animal test method.

- If a waiver has been granted allowing the use of a non-animal test method, research facilities will not be permitted to use an animal test method.

This change will save countless animals from suffering and help Maryland continue its path toward a future of better, more humane science.

Reducing Animal Suffering in Testing

In cases where a research facility is still permitted to use an animal test method, HB 1448 will ensure that the facility uses the fewest number of animals possible and reduces their pain, suffering, and stress. This is a common sense provision that reflects Maryland's commitment to both science and animal welfare. By passing this bill, Maryland will set an example for other states and prove that science and compassion can go hand in hand.

Ensuring Transparency and Accountability

Starting in 2027, HB 1448 will require all research facilities in Maryland to report important information about their testing each year. They will have to share:

- A description of each animal test method used and the reason the animal test method was required;
- The number and species of animals used;
- The types and number of non-animal test methods used; and
- The number of waivers received that allowed them to replace animal test methods.

This information will be made available to the public, ensuring that research facilities will be held accountable. This type of transparency is important because it will help Maryland's citizens see progress being made in reducing animal testing, and it will encourage more research facilities to choose non-animal methods.

Conclusion

HB 1448 is a major step forward for Maryland. It will reduce animal suffering, strengthen Maryland's leadership in modern science, and make research facilities more transparent. We strongly urge the Committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1448 as presented. Thank you for your time and for considering this important bill. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at smcfarland@aavs.org.

Sincerely,

Sherman McFarland
Policy Analyst