

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

SB423
Unfavorable

FROM: Sameer Sidh
Director, Maryland Government Affairs

DATE: February 13, 2026

RE: SB423 - Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals - Prohibitions and Adoption Requirements

Johns Hopkins opposes **SB 423 – Research Facilities and Testing Facilities That Use Animals - Prohibitions and Adoption Requirements**. This bill seeks to regulate research and testing facilities that use animals. The bill places restrictions on the use of dogs and cats by these facilities. The bill prohibits the use of what it terms traditional animal test methods where an alternative test method has been approved. This bill requires annual reporting on the number of dogs and cats released to animal rescue organizations, the names of animal rescue organizations receiving animals, and subjects entities to substantial fines for failure to comply with burdensome reporting requirements.

As the leading research institution in the state, Johns Hopkins University & Medicine takes seriously its mission to improve the health of 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 on animals.

For example, the state of Maryland played a key role in the development of COVID-19 vaccines. Starting 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.

This legislation is being filed in the backdrop of significant reductions in federal research grant activity, particularly from the National Institute of Health (NIH), supporting critical research to pursue a cure for cancer and other diseases. In 2025 alone, the value of Johns Hopkins’ multiyear federal research grant portfolio has declined by a staggering amount exceeding \$500 million. Excluding USAID grants, Johns Hopkins has endured 86 federal grant terminations worth approximately \$66 million. Future federal research funding prospects look bleak as well, with NIH posting 83% fewer new funding opportunities in 2025 as compared to calendar year 2024. Layering a State-level fine structure based on activity

already regulated by the federal government only exacerbates existential threats to research activity at Johns Hopkins and beyond.

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), and we are committed to complying with all federal laws that govern the use of animals in research.

The robust existing federal oversight and internal procedures obviate the need to establish a new layer of regulation. Adding another layer of oversight will be confusing for researchers in Maryland and their teams, will mean more time away from their labs and research, and generally make it harder to perform the research that is vital to our mission and provides significant benefit to our patients and to society.

For the reasons stated above, we urge an UNFAVORABLE committee report on **Senate Bill 423**.