

Submitter: Angela Calabrese

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General
Government, and Veterans

Measure: HB2904

On its surface, HB 2904 presents itself as a bill about transparency and accountability. In reality, it is part of an anti-research agenda meant to attack the Oregon National Primate Research Center. HB 2904 is redundant and unnecessary. Nearly every item that HB 2904 seeks to have reported, is already reported to federal agencies. The ONPRC is a federally funded institution and receives no state funding. Everything done at ONPRC is highly regulated, as is required by a number of federal laws. The center is biannually inspected by the USDA/APHIS. These inspections are unannounced and very thorough. Inspections include the animal housing facilities, medical and husbandry records, and approved Animal Care and Use protocols. Results of these inspections are posted publicly 2 to 3 days later. The ONPRC has been accredited by an outside organization, AAALACi, for more than 40 years. This accreditation is voluntary. When incidents occur, ONPRC immediately reports to them to all the required agencies. When two animals died in a cage washing incident in 2020, ONPRC immediately reported the incident and additionally informed all staff members of the deaths. A press release was released by ONPRC. All cage washing operations were immediately halted and the entire program was reviewed. There was no effort to hide or cover up the incident.

There is a misconception that people who work with research animals are heartless and uncaring. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The staff that care for these monkeys are extremely dedicated to their animals. Staff are there 7 days a week, in all kinds of weather, on every holiday, to make sure the monkeys are taken care of. Nearly all of the staff have a background in animal care, and many have worked at the center for more than a decade. The center also employs several veterinarians who provide care 24/7. There exists a culture of putting the monkeys first, which is why you can find articles about staff speaking up publicly when things do need to be addressed. Requiring the ONPRC to report redundant information to the state veterinarian will do little more than create financial and administrative burdens on our staff and it is unclear how reporting at the state level will improve animal welfare.