



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Testimony in Support of HB 2904
Presented to the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government and
Veterans
March 8, 2023
By Kathleen Conlee, Vice President, Animal Research Issues
The Humane Society of the United States**

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Tran, and members of the committee

I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony on behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our Oregon members and supporters urging support of HB 2904. This legislation will ensure much-needed transparency when institutions in the state use nonhuman primates for biomedical research and testing.

I worked for several years at a primate breeding and research facility and witnessed concerning treatment of animals and conduct of research, much of it paid for with taxpayer funding. That experience has driven me to spend more than twenty years closely following the conduct of laboratories and advocating for the protection of animals used in research and testing for the Humane Society of the United States. What happens to nonhuman primates and other animals in laboratories often remains behind closed doors unless organizations like ours carry out undercover investigations. Through various investigations, we have documented the typical life of animals suffering in laboratories while also uncovering violations of the Animal Welfare Act, as well as death and injury of animals, that would never have been unveiled if we had not done such work. These investigations have involved thousands of animals, including primates, dogs, pigs, mice and other animals. Overall, I can attest, firsthand, to the need for greater transparency and accountability from the research industry. **HB 2904 will improve transparency and accountability related to this issue of great interest to the public and will overall improve the welfare of the thousands of primates in laboratories in Oregon, including at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU).** This bill does not prohibit the use of primates in laboratories.

While facilities using primates are expected to comply with the Animal Welfare Act, it is important to emphasize that these are *minimum* standards. Unfortunately, there is a long history of OHSU (home of the Oregon National Primate Research Center) failing to comply with these minimal standards, resulting in suffering and death of primates. The string of serious violations by OHSU is significant, as statistics reveal that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rarely cites animal research institutions for Animal Welfare Act violations, so it is important to take notice when violations are documented.

As part of the Animal Welfare Act requirements, facilities like OHSU must submit minimal data to the USDA annually. Facilities are only required to report the total number of primates according to whether their use involved pain and/or distress and whether pain/distress were relieved. HB 2904 will require primate facilities to submit important information to the State Veterinarian annually, such as:

- the number of primates bred and used, including information on species;

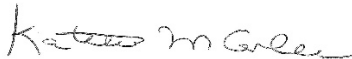
- the origin of each primate: born at institution or purchased by another institution;
- disposition of each primate: sale, death as part of the research, or death not related to the research for which the primate was used;
- a description of all research studies that used primates and corresponding funding sources;
- description of incidents involving injury or death;
- records related to action of enforcement agencies

Importantly, this information will be made publicly available on a website of the State Veterinarian or State Department of Agriculture. Knowing that the public will be watching and will demand accountability will help improve the treatment of primates in laboratories in the state. This is the least we can do for these animals who have so much taken from them.

Finally, the public is concerned about the use of primates and other animals used in biomedical research. A poll conducted in 2022 found that the majority of Americans support legislation to disclose information about the use of animals in their state. This support is across party lines.

The Humane Society of the United States urges the committee's support of HB 2904.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Conlee".

Kathleen Conlee
Vice President, Animal Research Issues
The Humane Society of the United States