

Submitter: Michael Flaningam

On Behalf
Of:

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

Measure: HB2904

The following are quotes from arguments in opposition to this bill:

“Adding more steps and redundancy by this bill will only hurt research and scientific progress.”

“The bill is a mechanism for advancing a personal anti-research agenda.”

“This bill is an attempt to have Animal Rights activists close down a federally funded facility.”

“Yes, there is sometimes human error and people cannot control the natural behavior of animals when the animals choose to fight each other.”

“Nonhuman primates research is absolutely necessary for the sake of human health.”

I am a physician now in my 30th year in medicine. I have spent the majority of my career touting the importance of evidence-based medicine, including the findings from animal studies. Up until a few years ago, I would have staunchly supported the arguments above.

But my view has changed. I moved to Oregon two years ago, joining a medical clinic that provides care largely for Native Americans. This opportunity has exposed me to a different viewpoint of the world - an Indigenous perspective that stands in stark contrast to what I have known all my life. It is one that recognizes the destruction caused by an attitude of manifest destiny and colonialism.

“...absolutely necessary for the sake of human health”??? How dare we humans have the audacity to assume that we are more special than any other living being on Earth, and that we are entitled to manipulate others for our own interest. “...humans can’t control the natural behavior of animals”??? Being imprisoned in a cage isn’t natural, yet we have no regrets controlling them for our selfish needs. This person callously shifts the blame for the fighting to the primates, taking no responsibility for us forcing them into an unnatural, tortured existence. And don’t try to argue that because researchers are following whatever protocols exist, that this allows us to rationalize the animals have good lives. The data we gather from forcibly studying animals is no different than the Nazi studies on concentration camp prisoners. I’ll go ahead and repeat myself, as I am well aware how radical that sounds to the researchers I used to support: animal studies are NO different. We humans have no right to torture other creatures, and any results from such studies are tainted.

Shame on the person who suggested this bill is merely a personal agenda. There are more than a handful of us who are uncomfortable with imprisoning and torturing

animals. This “scientific progress” requires a level of denial that rationalizes a brutal mindset to the point that it harms the human race more than it helps. I’m all for closing down any facility, funded by whomever, that does animal research.

I completely realize how crazy I sound to my animal research colleagues, as I used to be among you. And to you I suggest the challenge of studying an emerging health concern: is it possible that a significant, if not enormous, contributor to current human disease might be the stress hormone dysregulation triggered by a human nervous system that has been fine-tuned over hundreds of thousands of years of evolution, yet is struggling to manage in the world of the last few hundred years where we’re not exposed to the sun during the day, are awake late into the night, eat unnatural food, ambulate relatively little, isolate ourselves, and presume that the planet and all its ecosystems are our playground?