

Submitter: Joshua Marquis
On Behalf Of: Animal Wellness Action
Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Measure: HB2904

TESTIMONY OF JOSHUA
MARQUIS
IN SUPPORT OF HB 2904 ON
MARCH 9, 2023
BEFORE OREGON COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT, GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
TO REQUIRE TRANSPARENCY IN REPORTING ON PRIMATE
RESEARCH BY THE OREGON NATIONAL PRIMATE RESEARCH CENTER

Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Lewis and Tran, and Members of the Committee, my name is Joshua Marquis, I live in Astoria, Oregon. I am here today in my capacity as Director of Legal Affairs and Law Enforcement with Animal Wellness Action. I was the elected District Attorney for Clatsop County, from 1994 until 2019 and gained a reputation as a prosecutor who placed a high value on the prosecution of animal cruelty cases. I understand the undeniable ties between cruelty to animals and cruelty to particularly vulnerable people and that preventing cruelty to animals is key to creating a more just and civil society.

I'm here today to testify in support of HB 2904 to require the Oregon National Primate Research Center (the ONPRC) to be more transparent in reporting its use of nonhuman primates and thereby be more accountable to the people of Oregon, who have a long history of supporting the humane treatment of animals. Why ONPRC would fight so hard to avoid transparency and accountability should cause all of us, but especially you as Oregon lawmakers, serious concerns about the way this facility does what it does.

I was shocked when I learned that ONPRC has the worst animal welfare record of all the regional primate research centers. I was especially concerned when I learned that not only are animals killed in the course of the center's experiments, but also by instances of neglect and mistakes. For example, it was appalling to learn that two monkeys were boiled to death when a worker failed to remove them from their cages before running those cages through an industrial washing machine. Other animals have been starved to death, deprived of water, and killed in easily preventable accidents.

Let's be clear: If an ordinary citizen caused the death of their dog or cat through similar acts of negligence and omission, they would be arrested and charged with crimes under Oregon's animal cruelty statutes. As a former prosecutor, who helped

write the toughest of those laws in 1995 , I would have had no qualms whatsoever about considering charges against the workers and their supervisors, and possibly against ONRPC itself. The mere fact that the act was not intentional or that the overarching purpose of ONRPC is to advance medical research is no excuse - legally or morally.

But to make matters worse, the center does everything to keep information from concerned Oregonians, from animal advocacy groups, and even from state lawmakers performing their essential function as public servants. Rep. Gomberg's ordeal in obtaining records of animal mistreatment is alarming and demonstrates a level of arrogance and secrecy by ONRPC that demonstrate the center will not be forthcoming unless it is forced to do so by legislative action.

Oregonians care about what happens to animals, and they have a right to know what is happening in research institutions that perform experiments on animals, especially primates. I urge you to pass HB 2904 with a "do pass" recommendation, and I am happy to answer any questions.