

Submitter: Alissa Weaver

On Behalf
Of:

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

Measure: HB2904

Dear Committee Members:

I strongly support the passage of HB 2904 and its reporting requirements. I have been long concerned about the use of nonhuman primates at OHSU's primate research facility. These concerns began 30 years ago, while I was still in law school at Willamette University. As a concerned member of the public, I am entitled to know what experiments are being conducted and funded by taxpayer dollars, the purposes of such experiments and the fate of the nonhuman primate research subjects. I know these concerns are shared by the public at large as evidenced by the announcement over 10 years ago of the NIH's (National Institute of Health) decision to halt chimpanzee research. The Government Accountability Office was ordered by Congress to evaluate the NIH's Chimpanzee Management Program and OHSU needs to have similar information available to account to, not only the government entities overseeing these research facilities, but also for inquiry by the general public.

These reporting requirements required by HB 2904 will help facilitate OHSU's Primate Research Facility's compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and enforcement if violations are documented. There are laws that govern the treatment of research animals including, but not limited to, nonhuman primates. Unfortunately, with limited inspectors to enforce the protections, self-reporting by the facilities such as OHSU's Primate Research Facility must be trusted and evaluated for transparency and truthfulness.

Members of the public must have access to the information to advocate for non-human primates. If all the research being conducted is aboveboard and necessary, then OHSU should have no problem with the accountability that HB 2904 requires. If the powers that be at OHSU are resisting even this minimal accountability requirement that, in and of itself, should be extremely concerning to the Committee Members and to the general public. Nonhuman primates are capable of extreme mental and physical suffering, not unlike humans, and the disregard for their welfare or the minimal compliance by OHSU with environment and enrichment for these non-human primates should not be tolerated by Oregonians.

I attended a Continuing Legal Education Class years ago in which an attorney for OHSU spoke and she tried to give an example of an experiment being conducted at OHSU's Primate Research Center at the time. It involved urinary tract infections in

pregnant females. The attorney explained that the female primates were given a vest to wear which was the delivery system for a urinary bacterium into the primate. If the female tolerated the vest, and the first run of experiments, she was allowed to live to be subject to the same experiment again, after which point, she was euthanized. This attorney concluded that she didn't want her baby to get sick from her having a urinary tract infection when she was pregnant so made the assumption that all the audience members (all attorneys) would agree with OHSU's handling of the nonhuman primate and her fate after one or two very painful experiments. The audience of attorneys was in fact appalled at which point the OHSU's attorney declined to answer any further questions and took her leave. That is exactly the lack of transparency that is so concerning. If OHSU's own attorney is unable to field questions from other attorneys about an experiment she introduced to them, there clearly needs to be better transparency about what is going on at that facility and what the nonhuman primates are being subjected to there.

I respectfully ask the Committee members to approve HB 2904 and send it for voting.

Thank you-Alissa Weaver