



# OREGON NATIONAL PRIMATE *Research Center*

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Re: Written Transcript of Testimony Presented in Opposition to HB2904 at the House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans on 3/9/2023

Dear Chair Grayber and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me and my colleagues to speak to you today regarding why we oppose House Bill 2904.

For the record, my name is Jon Hennebold, Interim Director of the Oregon National Primate Research Center, also called ONPRC, at OHSU's West Campus. I am also a Professor in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology in the School of Medicine at OHSU. I have an active research program that focuses on Women's Health Issues, specifically developing infertility and family planning therapies.

Before commenting on HB 2904 specifically, I want to share a snapshot into the important research taking place at ONPRC, and with my colleagues here with me today, discuss the highly regulated environment we operate in and address the tragedy that took place several years ago.

First, ONPRC conducts important, life-saving research. Our researchers are preparing to take a vaccine for West Nile virus to human clinical trials. We are battling AIDS on several fronts, including a new treatment for the disease and an approach to limiting the spread of the disease. We've also made advancements in fertility to allow some men and women who become infertile while battling cancer to have children once they are cancer free. Very recently, we are advancing novel gene therapy approaches to treat genetic diseases and birth defects- including deafness and blindness. These are just a few examples of the ground-breaking research conducted at ONPRC. OHSU is a world-class research institution, and ONPRC is an important part of that distinction - world class researchers need and want access to ONPRC.

It was stated in a legislative newsletter that "research... (should not be) an opportunity for self-perpetuating researchers and research facilities to cash in on the federal grant system" and questioned the ethics of OHSU in seeking that funding. I want to unequivocally state that nothing could be further from the truth. Federal grants do not "make money" for research institutions, but universities across the country recognize the long-term benefits of advancing human and animal healthcare.

ONPRC is one of seven **national** primate research centers. Each center, including ONPRC, operates in a highly regulated environment at the federal level. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is one of the primary regulatory agencies overseeing ONPRC operations to ensure the welfare of the animals in our care. Funding is secured through competitive grants via the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other Federal agencies. We are the largest of the primate centers, care for more animals than any other center, and report publicly above the minimum of what is required by federal regulations any accidents or incidences. Thus, in actuality, we arguably have, on a per-animal basis, an outstanding safety record.

As has been highlighted, two rhesus macaque monkeys died at ONPRC in August 2020. In an effort to be transparent with our community and stakeholders, we quickly shared the tragic news with the public and federal regulators and had an in-depth, independent review of our policies and practices.

Before I turn to my colleague, Dr. Jeff Stanton, the attending veterinarian at ONPRC, to share with you in more depth the response of our dedicated people to that terrible incident, I want to clearly state that OHSU does not support HB 2904. There was no consultation with OHSU or ONPRC about its introduction.

Sincerely,  
Jon Hennebold, Ph.D.

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*and*

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