

Submitter: Marsha Rakestraw

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB181

Dear Members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

As an Oregonian and a family who adopted a laboratory survivor, I'm writing to urge you to support SB 181 to prohibit research facilities from using public funds to fund unnecessary research on dogs and cats.

I'm also asking you to expand the bill to close down the scientifically and ethically problematic OHSU primate facility.

Our family has always been animal lovers, but nine years ago we adopted Bodhi, a rescue from an undisclosed animal testing laboratory.

Bodhi was born in a commercial breeding facility where he lived his whole childhood in a cage, and then, at eight months, he was sold to a laboratory, where he was experimented on for two years before being rescued and becoming part of our family.

Until he was rescued, Bodhi had never touched grass or seen the whole sky.

We aren't allowed to know what was done to him, but from his lifelong PTSD, it's obvious that it was cruel and horrifying.

Bodhi still has so much trauma from his time in the laboratory. He is terrified of so many sounds: fireworks, thunder, loud machines or vehicles, rain, wind, thumps. Even if we just bump the table or drop a book or sneeze too loudly, it can trigger him into fear mode.

Sometimes, when he feels a little scared, he will come to us and either hide his face in our chests, or crawl under our legs (as if to hide).

And when he's really scared, nothing helps. He will tremble and pant and pace and drool—sometimes for hours after whatever scared him happened. Those nights when the scary thing happens for hours—such as heavy winds or a thunderstorm or fireworks—seem to last forever.

Bodhi also has severe food allergies, so he is on lifelong medication. And, he has other issues around food. Sometimes it's a real challenge to get him to eat.

With a lot of love and hard work, Bodhi is doing so much better than when he first joined our family nine years ago. When we first brought him home, he couldn't be near other people without trembling and trying to pull away. Now he enjoys walking up to new people and cautiously sniffing them, as long as they don't try to pet his head, and he runs up joyously to those humans he has chosen to include in his pack.

And Bodhi is one of the lucky ones, because he wasn't killed after being tortured in a laboratory. And I don't use that term lightly or exaggeratedly. He was tortured. No animal deserves to go through what most animals in laboratories endure. There is no moral justification—even if it were scientifically valid.

Using animals in experiments fails both humans and animals, which is why SB 181 should be passed and also expanded to close down the OHSU primate facility.

Using animals in experiments is problematic for numerous scientific and ethical reasons.

For example, as Drs. Hope Ferdowsian and L. Syd M Johnson note in their essay on using primates in biomedical research (<https://www.thehastingscenter.org/primates-in-medical-research-convenience-not-sound-science/>), "...scientists easily recognize the truth in the saying 'mice lie and monkeys exaggerate,' which points to a well-known problem in biomedical research: using nonhuman primates and other animals in research fails more often than it succeeds."

(For a more detailed view, please see this webinar in which Dr. Ferdowsian cogently highlights why there is a problematic reliance on using animals in research and the reasons that using animals in research fails:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2EuBOCv1oew>.)

The science and the ethics are clear: we must turn to an ethical, human-centric research framework. Passing SB 181 and expanding it to include shutting down the OHSU primate facility are scientifically and ethically important steps to helping both people and animals.

Thank you.