



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR LABORATORY ANIMAL SCIENCE

AALAS is an association of professionals that advances responsible laboratory animal care and use to benefit people and animals.

9190 Crestwyn Hills Dr.  
Memphis, TN 38125-8538  
(901) 754-8620  
fax: (901) 753-0046  
e-mail: info@aalas.org

September 14, 2017

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chair  
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and  
Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz  
Ranking Member Military Construction and Veterans  
Affairs, and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
722 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Schatz:

The American Association of Laboratory Animal Science (AALAS) represents over 14,000 dedicated professionals who provide care for the animals that enable biomedical research advancements. Since 1950, AALAS members have dedicated their careers to advancing responsible laboratory animal care and use to benefit people and animals. AALAS recognizes the vital role of canines in research, and supports animal based research as a legitimate, necessary, and socially responsible activity. AALAS also recognizes that scientific and medical knowledge developed through animal research has saved countless lives, has improved human and animal health, and has alleviated pain and suffering.

On behalf of our membership, I am expressing our concern for H.Amdt. 226 to H.R.3219 Make America Secure Appropriations Act of 2018, which was passed by the House and sent to the Senate on July 31, 2017. The amendment bars the VA Medical and Prosthetics Research program from conducting research using dogs and stipulates that VA funding for the following purposes is prohibited: "to purchase, breed, transport, house, feed, maintain, dispose of, or experiment on dogs as part of the conduct of any study assigned to pain Category D or E."

By using canines as an animal model, science has advanced the understanding of autoimmune function, cancer, epilepsy, immunodeficiency, metabolic disease, narcolepsy, and vision. A host of other diseases and conditions that afflict our veteran, civilian, and even animal populations have benefitted from vital canine-based research studies.

AALAS and its members fully support the 3Rs tenets of Russell and Burch (1959). Current government oversight ensures that the smallest numbers of animals necessary are studied and great care is taken to minimize animal discomfort in research protocols. The vast majority of research studies are conducted with mice or rats with canines only being studied when they are most suited for the research.

AALAS appreciates the opportunity to comment on this Amendment and joins with AVMA, APS, the American Legion, and Secretary David Shulkin to encourage the Senate to preserve the canine research studies at the VA.

Sincerely,

Paige A. Ebert, MBA, CMAR, RLATG  
President, AALAS  
9190 Crestwyn Hills Dr  
Memphis, TN 38125  
901-754-8620