



American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine

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September 20, 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 College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (ACLAM), a specialty board recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) as the certifying organization for laboratory animal medicine and a recognized specialty within the veterinary medical profession, was founded in 1957 to encourage education, training, and research in laboratory animal medicine and establish standards of training and experience for veterinarians professionally involved with the care and health of laboratory animals. ACLAM recognizes the vital role of canines in research, and supports animal based research as a legitimate, necessary, and socially responsible activity. ACLAM 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." This amendment would stop the use of dogs in research and this would be a tragic mistake. Dogs have been an invaluable model for helping veterans. Devices and treatments such as the cardiac pacemaker, the first liver transplant, the nicotine patch, the discovery of insulin, and most recently the first FDA-approved artificial pancreas were all developed through research with dogs at the VA. Canines have played a vital role in cancer, aging and Alzheimer's, heart disease, and diabetes. Additionally, 22 of the 25 most prescribed medications were brought to patients' bedsides—thanks to research with canines. By using canines as an animal model, science has advanced the understanding of a host of other diseases and conditions that afflict our veteran, civilian, and even animal populations.

ACLAM and its members fully support the 3Rs (Refine, Reduce, and Replace) tenets of Russell and Burch (1959). The use of dogs in research is highly regulated by the federal government and VA hospitals are accredited by AAALACI, a fully independent accrediting body. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs) composed of researchers, veterinarians and members representing public opinion review and approve all research protocols involving dogs. Part of this review entails a harm-benefit analysis in which the overall suffering caused by the proposed experiment is weighed against the potential value of the benefits accrued to society. Current government regulations ensure that dogs are only used when no other animal model is suitable and that the minimum number of animals are studied to ensure scientific validity. Trained veterinarians, veterinary technicians and animal care staff provide state-of-the-art care to minimize animal discomfort in research protocols. Pain alleviating analgesics and supportive care are always provided to research dogs unless there is a strong justification for their withholding.

John F. Bradfield
President

Stuart E. LeLand
President-Elect

F. Claire Hankenson
Past President

Timothy D. Mandrell
Secretary-Treasurer

Melvin W. Balk
Executive Director

ACLAM appreciates the opportunity to comment on this Amendment and joins with AALAS, AVMA, APS, the American Legion, and Secretary David Shulkin to encourage the Senate to preserve the ability to use dogs to further improve the medical care and treatment of our veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John F. Bradfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

John F. Bradfield, DVM, PhD
President, ACLAM