



September 7, 2006

The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Sensenbrenner:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), we urge you to give favorable consideration to the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (H.R. 4239), which would provide law enforcement officials with the tools they need to respond to harassment and violence perpetrated by animal rights extremists against organizations, individual scientists, and their family members.

Research with animals is one of the essential methods that scientists use in their efforts to develop treatments and cures for a large variety of diseases. Moreover, many laws protecting the public's health and safety require that medicines, household products, and chemicals used in agriculture be tested on animals. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult for scientists to advance scientific understanding and public health because of the increasingly aggressive tactics that animal rights extremists are using to frighten and intimidate the families of researchers and the businesses that have ties to animal enterprises. Most recently, the threats and harassment to which the family of a prominent UCLA neurobiologist was subjected led the scientist to discontinue his research with animals aimed at better understanding Parkinson's disease.

It is particularly troubling that these radical groups target individuals and businesses that often have only remote connections to animal enterprises. It is for these reasons that AAAS believes that our laws need to be strengthened in a manner that will allow law enforcement officials to protect against these tactics while also protecting our First Amendment rights.

AAAS, the world's largest multi-disciplinary science society, representing the interests of ten million scientists worldwide, has a long-standing interest and expertise in issues relating to the responsible use of animals in scientific research, education, and testing. During its nearly 160 years, AAAS has issued seven resolutions acknowledging the value of animals in research, testing, and education. The first of these resolutions dates from 1896. A copy of the most recent one is attached. Others may be found at http://archives.aaas.org/docs/resolutions.php?t_id=72.

Sincerely,

Gilbert S. Omenn, M.D., Ph.D.
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