

TESTIMONY OF FREDERICKA S. HELLER, M.D.  
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IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 873

DELIVERED TO THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

MAY 25, 1989

I would like to thank the members of the House Committee on Judiciary for allowing me to speak today in support of House Bill 873. My thanks also to Rep. Tom Murphy for sponsoring this legislation.

STATE LICENSING AND INSPECTION OF RESEARCH FACILITIES

I am a physician with a private practice in obstetrics and gynecology in Reading, Pennsylvania. As a medical professional, I am concerned that there be legitimate and sufficient regulations on the scientific community to ensure that the sacrifice of laboratory animals is professionally defensible and humanely conducted.

Section 5511.1 (a) of this bill provides the state with the authority to license and monitor animal laboratory facilities, and to enforce humane standards of care in these laboratories. While some researchers resent any increase in regulation, the reality is that existing laws do little to protect laboratory animals. Many species are exempted from the regulations for the Animal Welfare Act. Enforcement of minimal animal care codes is inadequate because the U.S. Department of Agriculture's inspection division is under-funded and under-staffed.

Shocking abuses of animals have been exposed at institutions in Pennsylvania and across the nation. The State has both the right and the obligation to monitor and regulate the treatment of laboratory animals so that future tragic and embarrassing cases, like the highly-publicized animal abuse at the University of Pennsylvania's head injury laboratory and the Biosearch cosmetic

testing facility can be avoided.

#### Animal Tests for Cosmetics and Household Products

As a consumer and the mother of a seven month-old child, I am concerned about the safety of cosmetics and household products. As a physician, however, I know that animal tests can never assure that a product will be safe for human use, because animals differ so significantly from humans.

Because of these differences, animal tests are of little or no use to emergency physicians in the management of cases of accidental exposures and poisonings. Instead, doctors rely on case reports, clinical experience and experimental data from clinical trials in humans to determine the optimal course of treatment for their patients.

One need only look at the shelves of a local grocery store or pharmacy to know that there are hundreds of products on the market which will cause irritation and damage if accidentally splashed in the eye, exposed to the skin, or swallowed. Clearly, the animal tests do not keep dangerous products off the market.

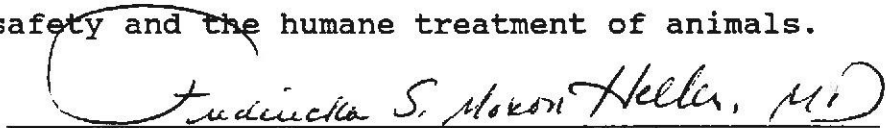
Irritancy and acute toxicity tests on animals have little relevance to human experience, are of no clinical value, and are a senseless waste of animal lives. It is high time to reform our cruel and archaic consumer products testing practices.

#### STUDENTS' RIGHT TO REFUSE TO EXPERIMENT ON ANIMALS

The right to exercise one's religious or moral convictions is a basic tenet of the American political system. Yet some students who have declined, for ethical reasons, to participate in an animal experiment or training exercise have been harrassed

and penalized for exercising their beliefs. This is wrong. Florida and California have enacted legislation to protect a student's right not to participate in an animal experiment, and Pennsylvania should follow their lead by enacting section 5511.1(e) of this bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I urge you to vote favorably on this legislation. With its passage, the state of Pennsylvania will set an important precedent for consumer safety and the humane treatment of animals.



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