

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 873
DELIVERED TO THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
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Thank you, members of the House Committee on Judiciary for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 873, a bill to regulate animal research.

As an ophthalmologist, I would like to specifically address the provision in the bill which will prohibit the Draize eye irritancy test for cosmetics and household products.

In my practice, I routinely prescribe eyedrops. It is important that these products be safe for use in the eye. However, I have never considered nor have I ever inquired about the Draize test results for specific preparations before prescribing them to my patients. The Draize test is a poor scientific model and has little redeeming application to the development of preparations intended for use in the human eye, because animal results cannot be predictably extrapolated to humans. For the same reason, it is equally inappropriate to use the results of Draize testing for household products or for cosmetics which may reach the eye accidentally.

I have heard researchers suggest that banning Draize testing will be the first step in a domino process whereby all animal research is eventually halted. This argument is neither germane nor accurate. In fact, the Draize test gives a public relations "black eye" to animal research in general. Rationalization of the Draize test by saying it is "better than nothing" is worth no more than the test itself. The Draize test has not saved one human life, and it probably never will.

I would like to briefly mention that I support the other provisions of this bill. Currently, laws protecting laboratory animals are inadequate and poorly enforced. The State should, and must, have the authority to monitor the laboratory animal facilities in its domain in order to assure that they meet humane standards of care. And students who, for religious or ethical reasons, decline to participate in an animal experiment or training exercise must have the legal right to do so without penalty. Laws to protect the rights of students to exercise their moral convictions have already been passed in California and Florida, and Pennsylvania must enact similar protections.

In summary, I urge you to vote favorably on House Bill 873 because it is a responsible and humane piece of legislation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before this committee in support of this important bill.

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