



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

URGING PUBLICLY FUNDED UNIVERSITIES IN ILLINOIS TO COMPLY WITH FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS REGARDING USE OF ANIMALS IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

WHEREAS, various taxpayer-funded research institutions across the nation, including the University of Illinois (U of I), have refused to provide records requested under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from advocacy groups regarding animal care and justification for the experiments conducted; and

WHEREAS, many of these same institutions have been involved in costly litigation over animal research practices and documents; and

WHEREAS, opening records would jeopardize neither research nor the privacy of employees as federal FOIA and state public-disclosure laws contain protections for trade secrets and other forms of personal and proprietary information; and

WHEREAS, a lawsuit filed by the Beagle Freedom Project (so named because beagles' size and docile nature make them the frequent subject to such research) states that research protocols show that the U of I is testing cardiovascular toxicity, and that the university admitted to classifying its veterinary records as research records so it doesn't have to disclose them; and

WHEREAS, the Beagle Freedom Project has helped pass legislation in the states of Minnesota, California, Connecticut, and Nevada that requires public labs to offer animals up for adoption after experiments conclude, and animal records the project obtained from the Ohio State University helped pass a law barring labs from obtaining animals from questionable sources; and

WHEREAS, the Animal Welfare Act has been the primary federal law covering laboratory animals in the United States, but there is no provision in the law that restricts what can be done to an animal during a study; it applies only to the type of care an animal receives before and after experimentation; and

WHEREAS, an increasing number of scientists have admitted that unlike experimenting on animals to help humans, modern methods, such as in vitro testing, computer modeling, human-patient simulators, and genomics, take advantage of technological developments to provide more accurate and humane options for research; and

WHEREAS, so powerful and effective are these non-animal technologies that in 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Toxicology Program, and the National Institutes of Health launched the ToxCast initiative to promote cutting-edge technology to replace the use of animals in toxicity testing; and

WHEREAS, recent significant changes in the laboratory animal regulatory environment have prompted new scientific protocols, which state that using animals in research is a privilege granted by society to the research community with the expectation that such use will provide either significant new knowledge or lead to improvement in human and/or animal well-being, and that these principles direct the research community to accept responsibility for the care and use of animals during all phases of the research effort; and

WHEREAS, in June of 2016 President Obama signed the first federal bill that will modernize chemical testing, reduce the use of animals, and require the EPA to fund and develop non-animal methods; and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable that taxpayers in Cook County and the State of Illinois want to know that animals used in research are being treated humanely.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby urge Illinois state institutions that use public funds for scientific research on animals to cooperate with FOIA requests to help ascertain the nature of such experimentation and to justify the expenditure of public funds.