

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NO. 6565,
AN ACT CONCERNING HUMANE EDUCATION**

FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MARCH 9, 2009

Dear Sen. Gaffey, Rep. Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Stacy Lopresti-Goodman and I am a Ph.D. candidate in Experimental Psychology at the University of Connecticut where my area of expertise is perception and motor control. The courses I have taken in pursuit of this degree have covered topics including anatomy, physiology, the brain and nervous system and perception, all which require an intimate understanding of the way animals' bodies work.

In my four years as an undergraduate and five years as a graduate student studying in this field, I have never once dissected or experimented on an animal for any purpose, and do not feel as though my education or career as a scientist have suffered.

In addition to being a student at the University of Connecticut, I have also been a Teaching Assistant and the sole lecturer for multiple courses which cover topics similar to those I have taken- anatomy, physiology, the brain and nervous system- and I do not include animal experimentation or dissection in any of my curricula. I do, however, spend an entire lecture discussing the ethical and scientific concerns raised by the use of animals in experimentation and teaching in Psychology. I have also introduced students to the many modern alternatives available, including, among other things, computer simulations.

For example, when I was an undergraduate and others were using animals, I learned about operant conditioning through the use of a computer program called Sniffy the Virtual Rat. While some suggest that non-animal teaching tools are not as effective, studies actually show that students who use alternatives to animals perform as well as or better than their peers who learn using animals.¹ As someone who became sensitive to animal issues at a young age, I was fortunate that I was not required to experiment on animals and that my teachers were also sensitive to this issue. Had I been forced to in order to pursue my degrees, I am confident that my career trajectory would have been drastically different.

This would not have been an anomaly. Research shows that using animals in dissection and other harmful classroom experiments at all stages of the educational process discourages some, especially females, from pursuing careers in science.² If even one student is deterred from this career path for this reason, we are doing a disservice to that student and science more generally for punishing compassion and perpetuating the myth that we must harm animals to advance science and educate students.

We must teach students that science and compassion for animals are compatible. House Bill 6565 would accomplish this by exposing both educators and students to information about the humane and respectful treatment of animals. It would also insure that no student with ethical objections to harming animals would be forced to do so in order to pass a class.

Thank you for your time. I urge you to support House Bill 6565.

Sincerely,

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(see reverse for References)

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- ¹ Patronek G.J. & Rauch A. (2007). Systematic review of comparative studies examining alternatives to the harmful use of animals in biomedical education. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 230(1), 37-43.
- ² Capaldo, T. (2004). The psychological effects on students of using animals in ways that they see as ethically, morally or religiously wrong. *Alternatives to Laboratory Animals*, 32(1), 525-531.