

Dear Mrs. Giannaros,

Picture this: A school where kids do dissections online, where no living thing was killed for the dissection, where the virtual frog is just as good as the real frog. Students are care free about the dissection grade, because they don't have to be upset about hurting animals. This dream can become a reality with your consent. My name is Lara and I'm an eighth grader at Ridgefield Public Schools. I firmly believe that students should not have to participate in dissection of animals for three major reasons. Students who dissect become upset, alternatives are as good as the real thing, and many states have already allowed students to refuse dissection.

Firstly, students of all educational levels object to cutting animals up for dissection. By forcing them to do something against their will, the science teachers interfere and even stop the learning process. It has been proven that by being forced to cut up dead animals, students suffer from psychological trauma, don't pursue a career in science, and refuse to continue with science education. Many women don't go into science as a career because they are afraid to, or it's a "men's job." By scaring these children off with dissection, the number of girls who pursue science as a career diminishes vastly. I was forced against my will to do a dissection, and it made me feel sick inside. I didn't want to go to school the next day, and cried at the thought of all these poor animals being killed, just so the same experiment could be done over and over again with the same results. I believe that students all over the U.S. feel this way, and will be very upset if forced into dissection.

Next, the alternatives are just as good as the real thing. Modern computer programs, DVDs, and models have been shown to teach anatomy and biology as well as or better than dissection. These alternatives save teachers and schools time and money because they last for years and do not need to be re-ordered for each class. With this extra money, school systems could invest in extra-curricular activities, new learning software, and better textbooks. The whole school community could depend on this money. In support of this, I went online to Froguts.com, where virtual dissections are free or very cheap. The graphics on this website are excellent, and are as good as the real thing. There is even a built-in teacher to explain what is happening during the dissection. Please go on for yourself to see this amazing program. I guarantee that you will agree- these virtual dissections are remarkable.

Finally, fifteen states have laws or policies allowing students to opt out of dissection. These include Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York. These states realize that students should be treated as citizens and not property. We have a voice too! Please listen and understand that not everyone wants to slit open a dead animal's body and remove its intestines and organs. It's a disgusting, sick practice, and needs to be removed. Everyone who cares about animals will thank you. Please consider my argument when you think about signing this bill. Many people stand by my side, and we all care about the well being of students, animals, and the community. Dissection is not in any way okay, and needs to be a choice, not a must. Please, when your committee signs the bill, think of all the eighth graders out there who are just like

me, knowing that our well-being depends on you. Thank you, and know that we appreciate all you have done.

From,  
Lara Blumrich  
Eighth-grade student