



National Association for
Biomedical Research



UPDATE

January 12, 2017

As we noted in our last NABR Update of 2016, NABR is changing the way it delivers news to members in an effort to be more timely and relevant. To that end, we present the latest news stories of interest to the animal research community.

115th Congress Opens Session Before Inauguration

Last week marked the beginning of the 115th Congress, the federal legislative session for 2017-2018. As 55 total new Freshmen and hundreds of returning lawmakers gather on Capitol Hill, NABR is meeting with relevant committees and staff. These meetings serve as an introduction to NABR, its membership, and important issues facing the future of biomedical research. NABR has also delivered a welcome letter to each member of the 115th Congress and encourages you to do the same. [Please click here to send your own welcome letter](#) to the President, Vice President, both of your Senators, your Congressperson and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This tiny investment of your time will pay significant dividends in terms of educating policy makers about the value of humane animal research.

As determined on Election Day in November, Republicans are in the majority in both the House and Senate for the 115th Congress: by a 241-193 margin in the House and a 52-46 majority in the Senate. Republican President-elect Donald Trump is roughly one week away from being sworn into office and Congress is already focusing its efforts on reducing regulatory creep, confirmation of Cabinet positions, tax reform and many other tasks.

With the new Congress comes new leadership in key committees of jurisdiction for NABR's issues. Please see below for an updated listing of the Chairman and Ranking Member of these committees.

[House Agriculture Committee](#)

Chairman: Representative Mike Conaway (R-TX)

Ranking Member: Representative Collin Peterson (D-MN)

The House Agriculture Committee has jurisdiction over the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and

the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA).

[House Energy and Commerce Committee](#)

Chairman: Representative Greg Walden (R-OR)

Ranking Member: Representative Franke Pallone (D-NJ)

The House Energy & Commerce Committee covers all subjects pertaining to the nation's commerce and matters relating to the public's health. Agency jurisdiction includes the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and many others.

[House Appropriations- Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee](#)

Chairman: Representative Robert Aderholt (R-AL)

Ranking Member: Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee controls the appropriation of federal funds for the USDA, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and enforcement of the AWA.

[House Appropriations- Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee](#)

Chairman: Representative Tom Cole (R-OK)

Ranking Member: Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)

The Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee is responsible for the funding of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

[Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee](#)

Chairman: Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS)

Ranking Member: Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)

The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee is the Senate counterpart of the House Agriculture Committee and similarly has jurisdiction over the USDA and the AWA.

[Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee](#)

Chairman: Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN)

Ranking Member: Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, like the House Energy & Commerce Committee, oversees all matters related to public health and the NIH.

[Senate Environment and Public Works Committee](#)

Chairman: Senator John Barrasso (R-WY)

Ranking Member: Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee's duties, as pertaining to biomedical research, focus on issues of wild animals, the environment, and the nation's infrastructure.

Senate May Soon Confirm HHS Secretary

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee [is scheduled to hold a hearing on Wednesday, January 18](#) to consider the nomination of Representative Tom Price (R-GA) as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). Before any appointed Cabinet member can be confirmed, the Senate must hold a hearing with the committee that has jurisdiction over the agency related to the position; in this case, the HELP committee has jurisdiction of the Secretary of HHS. Following this hearing, on a date yet to be determined, the Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing, in which they are expected to vote to send the confirmation to the Senate floor. A final vote to confirm Price as Secretary will occur on the Senate floor. [According to Roll Call](#), "it is the Finance Committee that has primary responsibility for the Health and Human Services nomination, since it has jurisdiction over taxes and entitlement programs like Medicare and Medicaid." President-elect Donald Trump has at the time of this writing not announced a selection for Agriculture Secretary or Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Please watch for updates from NABR throughout the nomination and confirmation process.

Dog Adoption Bill Introduced in North Dakota

North Dakota has introduced a bill in the state assembly that would require dogs used in research facilities to be adopted upon completion of the study, a practice already in place at most research institutions. [House Bill 1267](#) would require animal research facilities to offer retired research dogs to animal rescue organizations, animal shelters or through private placement before considering euthanizing the animals. Research facilities would also be required to establish a written agreement with the animal rescue organizations or animal shelters. This bill should be of concern to the biomedical research community. Similar bills have been advertised by the Beagle Freedom project, an animal activists group that operates under a stated objective of ending animal research. The group has also

indicated its desire to see biomedical institutions adopt out additional research species such as rabbits, pigs and rodents. Similar bills have seen traction in past legislative sessions in other states like Illinois and Maryland and passed last year in the State of New York.

Two Organizations File Lawsuits Against PETA

Two new lawsuits have been filed against the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). On Thursday, [the Missouri Primate Foundation sued PETA](#) for hiring an employee to allegedly serve as an infiltrator at its facility and take undercover videos.

The DeYoung Family Zoo, a privately owned zoo in Michigan, also recently sued PETA for publishing false information about its use of primates in social media, which was also picked up by the press. [According to MLive](#), “the lawsuit contends PETA is a ‘militant, activist, animal rights group using its cloak as a non-profit organization to threaten and bring litigation under the Endangered Species Act as the basis for some of its fundraising activities and make claims for attorney fees ... to fund its litigation war chest ... to end private ownership of animals and to have human or non-property rights bestowed upon non-wild, non-human primates.’”

Both lawsuits were filed after PETA threatened to sue the facilities by claiming they are violating the Endangered Species Act by subjecting primates to “[slavery and imprisonment](#).” Neither facility uses primates for biomedical research purposes.

Scheduling of 2017 Animal Rights National Conference Announced

This year’s [Animal Rights National Conference](#) has been scheduled for August 3-6 at the Hilton Mark Center in Alexandria, organizers announced. This conference draws over 100 presenters from approximately 60 different animal rights organizations. The agenda is not yet available. NABR members in the greater Washington, DC area should remain on alert for unusual activity and coordinate with security professionals.