



National Association for
Biomedical Research



UPDATE

January 31, 2017

Senate Democrats Delay HHS Secretary Vote

The Senate Finance Committee was scheduled to vote on the confirmation of Representative Tom Price (R-GA) this morning to be the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, but the vote was delayed due to failure of the committee to meet a quorum. In order to proceed with a vote or conduct business, [Senate Finance Committee rules](#) state that at least one committee member from the Majority Party and Minority Party must be present. No committee Democrats attended the hearing thus forcing Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) to postpone the vote until a date yet to be determined.

[The Washington Post](#) reported that the Democrats on the Finance Committee gathered in Ranking Member Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR)'s office before the hearing and agreed to boycott the hearing due to concerns about Price's past financial investments.

Also this week, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted in favor of Texas Governor Rick Perry to be the U.S. Secretary of Energy and Representative Ryan Zinke (R-MT) to be the U.S. Secretary of Interior. A final confirmation vote for these Cabinet positions will occur in the full Senate soon. A date has not yet been set for a hearing in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry for the nomination of Sonny Perdue to be Agriculture Secretary.

Trump Executive Order on Regulatory Burden

Yesterday, President Trump signed an executive order requiring that for every new regulation put forward by the federal government, two existing regulations must simultaneously be annulled. Although specific regulations were not identified, [Trump has previously stated an intention to reduce federal regulations by 75% or more, and reiterated that point in a White House meeting with pharmaceutical company executives this morning](#). As reported by the New York Times, [he also promised he would slash regulations](#) at the Food and Drug Administration and make it easier for them to manufacture products in the United States.

["\[W\]e don't need 97 different rules to take care of one element," the President said Monday.](#)

Responsibility for identifying regulations to be rescinded will belong to the [White House's Office of Management and Budget](#), an organization in the Executive Branch that reviews agency programs and ensures that policies and funding are in alignment with the President's priorities.

NABR welcomes your thoughts and opinions about animal research regulations at info@nabr.org or (202) 857-0540.

Seven States Now Considering Research Dog and Cat Adoption Bills

Seven states have introduced bills that would require research institutions to work with third party adoption organizations to find homes for research dogs and cats after studies are complete. In the past few days, [Maryland](#) and [Maine](#) have joined five other states who have also introduced adoption

legislation for retired research animals—[Hawaii](#), [Massachusetts](#), [New Jersey](#), [North Dakota](#) and [Rhode Island](#).

These bills are being supported by animal activist organizations including the Beagle Freedom Project and the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS), two groups that have stated their objective is to end animal research. NAVS claims on its website that “over reliance on animal models is actually counterproductive; it often sidetracks meaningful scientific progress while wasting millions of taxpayer dollars and other resources.”

Last week, North Dakota’s Agriculture Committee held a hearing to consider its version of the research animal adoption bill, [HB 1267](#), giving the bill a “do not pass” recommendation [by a vote of 12-1](#).

While it appears the North Dakota bill will not advance, odds of passage may be higher in other states, especially in those states where little or no dog or cat research is conducted. Such is the case in Rhode Island where [HB 5161](#) has been introduced. Similar legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate ([HB 3](#), [SB 593](#)) in Hawaii. The second bill, SB 593, is headed for a public hearing with the agriculture committee tomorrow. Bills were also introduced in the House and Senate of New Jersey earlier in the legislative term ([A 4385](#) and [S 1479](#)). [LD 246/HP 179](#) was introduced in the Maine state legislature today.

A bill in Massachusetts, [SD 936](#), is different from the bills in the aforementioned states as it would set a 2-year cap for the amount of time a dog or cat can be used in a study.

[A research dog and cat adoption bill has now appeared in Maryland](#) for the third year in a row, after a protracted but successful battle brought by Maryland research institutions last year.

Here is a breakdown of the institutions these state bills would affect:

Hawaii: HB 3: “an organization that is engaged in: (1) Animal research for the purpose of testing the performance, safety, or quality of a product; or (2) Research for scientific, medical, or educational purposes.” SB 593: “a facility of an institute of higher education that receives public money, including tax exempt status; a facility that provides research in collaboration with an institution of higher education; or a facility that conducts experiments on cats or dogs for science, testing, education, or research purposes”

Maine: “a facility that conducts experiments on dogs or cats for science, testing, education or research purposes. “Research facility” includes a higher education research facility that receives funding from the State, including tax-exempt status, or a facility that provides research in collaboration with a higher education research facility”

Maryland: “INCLUDES: (I) A HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH FACILITY; (II) A SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FACILITY; (III) A MEDICAL RESEARCH FACILITY; AND (IV) A PRODUCT TESTING FACILITY.”

Massachusetts: “facility that is privately owned or funded; or receives public funding, including, but not limited to, any subsidy, grant or tax exemption, either directly or indirectly, through collaboration with an institution of higher education, that is engaged in animal research for scientific, medical, or educational purposes.”

New Jersey: “An institution of higher education, or a facility that conducts research in collaboration with an institution of higher education”

North Dakota: “a higher education institution research facility that receives public funding or is tax - exempt, a facility that provides research in collaboration with a higher education facility, or any other facility that conducts experiments on dogs or cats for scientific, testing, educational, or research purposes.”

Rhode Island: “A higher education research facility that receives public money, including tax-exempt status, or a facility that provides research in collaboration with a higher education facility”

NABR will continue to update its membership on the status of these bills. In the meantime, if you live in any of the states where this legislation has been introduced, please take a moment to contact your State Representative and State Senator and encourage them to oppose these unnecessary proposals. [NABR's talking points](#) may be helpful in speaking with your legislators and [NABR's coverage](#) of dogs' role in research will emphasize how important they are to improving global human and animal health. Contact information for lawmakers in those states can be found at the links above.

Humane Society Legislative Fund Releases Congressional Scorecard

The [Humane Society Legislative Fund \(HSLF\)](#) published its most recent [Humane Scorecard](#) on Friday. It ranks federal lawmakers based on their votes regarding various animal rights-related bills, such as regulating animal research among other initiatives. Bonus points are awarded to the legislators who sponsored at least one HSUS-backed bill during 2016. Several issues the scorecard emphasize include horse soring, changes to the regulatory process, and a letter asking for funds in order for the USDA to enforce the Animal Welfare Act.

A quick review of HSLF's website includes a number of findings. The average score for Senate Democrats was 86 out of 100+, while Senate Republicans averaged only 17. Members of the House of Representatives performed similarly with Democrats scoring an average of 89 and Republicans earning 20. New England Members of Congress scored the highest number of points on average while Members of Congress from the Southeast scored lowest. HSLF also gave special thanks to 11 Senators and 37 Representatives, including Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), and Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), who took a "[pro-animal position on 7 scored items plus extra credit for leading on animal protection issue\(s\)](#)." The full list, along with further details about the 2016 Humane Scorecard, [can be found here](#).

How to Best Contact Policy Makers

As technology advances and people rely more on social media in their daily lives, the methods for contacting our Representatives and Senators is also changing. Digital advocacy, specifically the use of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, is becoming an increasingly important tool for letting Members of Congress know which issues are important to constituents. Social media sites provide a quick and simple way to contact legislators, and research shows that if enough constituents contact them using social media, they will begin to pay attention to the issues.

Email is Not Always the Most Effective

Over the past few years, email has been a commonly used tool for contacting legislators because it is easy and can be done from any location. However, [Members of Congress receive a plethora of emails from constituents](#), and as such it is difficult for staffers to read all of the emails and to respond in a non-generic manner. Social media, however, may be an equally effective method of communication for the biomedical research community.

Social Media is Increasingly Important

Creating a tweet on Twitter or a post on Facebook is simple and effective. When a Hill staffer logs into the Member's social media accounts, they are able to quickly read all of the notifications about issues and concerns from constituents, over the course of just a few minutes. To emphasize this, the Congressional Management Foundation recently produced a bipartisan report called [#SocialCongress2015](#), in which it surveyed Hill staffers about the importance of social media in getting the attention of legislators or staffers. Results suggest that social media generally strengthens relationships between Members of Congress and constituents. The survey results also show that all it takes for a Member of Congress to pay attention to an issue is to receive about 30 comments on one of

his or her social media posts. Timing is also important, [as most Hill staffers tend to read comments on the Member's posts within 6 hours after posting](#). So, it is imperative to contact your member in a timely manner.

Pick Up the Phone

Even in today's era of social media, contacting legislators via telephone is an art that has not been lost. Using the telephone is an important way for constituents to offer a personal touch when expressing their concerns, especially if they are unable to speak to the legislator or staffer in person.

While opponents of animal research tend to use social media as their primary means of communication with policymakers, it is recommended that the biomedical research community begins to adopt these tools, as evidence shows they have become effective.