



June 7, 2017

Dr. Francis Collins will Continue as NIH Director

President Donald Trump [announced last night](#) that Dr. Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., will continue to serve as Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) under the Trump Administration. Collins, a physician-geneticist, has served in this role since 2009, leading the Brain Research Through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative, the Cancer Moonshot, and other large research projects. Before his appointment as NIH Director by President Barack Obama in August 2009, Collins led the Human Genome Project.

“Dr. Collins has been, and will continue to be, a strong partner in making the case for a sustained federal commitment to medical research. I look forward to working with him to ensure NIH has the resources it needs to advance progress toward new, life-saving treatments and cures,” Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, [stated in a press release](#).

Collins is [the first NIH Director since the 1970s](#) to serve under two presidents. Because he was confirmed by the Senate during the Obama Administration he will not need to be reconfirmed.

Click here to read the White House's [press release](#).

Beagle Freedom Bill Introduced in Delaware

Legislation requiring animal research institutions to work with third party adoption organizations to find homes for retired research animals was introduced yesterday in Delaware. [Senate Bill 101](#) would require that institutions enter agreements with animal rescue organizations or animal shelters, offer to adoption organizations healthy dogs and cats that are no longer used in studies, or find homes for the animals via private placement. [S.B.101](#) was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Children and Social Services. The 2017 legislative session for Delaware ends on June 30 and bills introduced in this session can carry over into next year.

An animal rights group called the Beagle Freedom Project (BFP) has lobbied for this law, along with similar bills

across the country. The group claims a mainstream mission, finding homes for retired research animals, but actually aims to end all testing and research with animals. [Click here](#) to read a recent POLITICO story questioning BFP. To read NABR's concerns and questions about the bills pressed forward by BFP, [please click here](#).

This year alone, research animal adoption legislation has been introduced in eleven states: Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Texas. NABR and the biomedical research community have successfully stopped the passage of legislation in six of these states, but bills are pending in Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, in addition to Delaware.

As NABR previously reported, last week the Illinois State Legislature passed S.B.1884 by a vote of [115-0](#). The bill is now awaiting Governor Bruce Rauner's signature. If you or someone you know resides in Illinois, [please send this pre-formatted letter](#) to the Governor urging him to VETO S.B.1884!

[CLICK HERE TO SEND A LETTER OF OPPOSITION TO ILLINOIS GOVERNOR BRUCE RAUNER](#)

For more information and resources about research animal adoption legislation, see [NABR's State Adoption Bills Toolkit](#).

First Legal Advocate for Animals Testifies in CT Court

A Connecticut law that allows the assignment of court-appointed legal advocates for animals has been applied for the first time. [House Bill 5344 was signed in May 2016](#), but last week marked the first time that one of the eight approved advocates have testified in court on behalf of, in this case, three pit bulls owned by a person who was charged with dogfighting.

"Desmond's Law," as H.B. 5344 is known, [has generated media coverage](#). The law offers discretionary authority to the presiding judge, who may or may not decide to appoint an animal advocate. [Per the Associated Press](#), seven lawyers and one law professor (assisted by her law students) have been approved as advocates. In the eight months since the law became effective, there have been five cases where advocates were appointed.

The law does not afford additional rights to animals, nor does it allow advocates to bring cases on behalf of animals. It permits courts the option to appoint a separate advocate to "represent the interests of the animal or the interests of justice." Advocates are only appointed after a case has begun and the advocate's duties are to monitor the case, attend hearings, find information that could assist the judge or fact finder, and present information or recommendations to the court.

Desmond's Law is unlikely to have an effect on animal research, as it applies to criminal cases brought under

Connecticut's animal cruelty statute, which contains a medical research exemption. However, the case demonstrates an increasing interest in the intersection between animals and the legal system.

FBR Shares Blog Post about Zika Threat

As shared in a [blog post](#) by the Foundation for Biomedical Research, [last week officials reported](#) a dramatic increase in the number of babies in New York City who either tested positive for the mosquito-borne Zika virus or were diagnosed with the characteristic developmental symptoms in the brain that are closely associated with the infection. The same day, a medical journal published research by [a team of scientists](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW) that suggests the threat posed by Zika may be more significant than initially understood, in terms of both the number of pregnant women who may become infected and the scope of the symptoms that may present after delivery.

To read more about UW-Madison's research on Zika and to read FBR's full blog post, [click here](#).

Mashable Raises Questions about PETA's Tactics

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has produced and released a new video of alleged animal abuse. But is it real? [Click here](#) to read Mashable's story questioning PETA's use of CGI in publishing a video that the news organization claims is "completely fake."