



Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Founded 1868

Main Office • 350 South Huntington Avenue • Boston, MA 02130 • (617) 522-7400

Testimony in Regard to
the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals
in Cambridge

*Wants to speak
FOR:*

Presented by:

Gus W. Thornton, **D.V.M.**
President

Massachusetts Society for the Prevention
of Cruelty to Animals

June 5, 1989

Mr. Mayor, members of the City Council, my name is Dr. Gus W. Thornton. I am the President of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and have been a practicing veterinarian for 32 years. I am here to speak tonight on the Joint Recommendations of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in Cambridge.

The MSPCA supports the recommendations and feels that with further clarification and additions they will ensure the welfare of animals used in Cambridge research facilities.

I would like to outline these suggested clarifications and additions. With regard to Item 1 of Joint Recommendations which deals with the care and use of all animals: it should be clearly defined that all animals housed and used in research facilities are covered. Current gaps in both state and federal laws governing the care and use of animals in research leave many, if not most animals, unprotected. The Animal Welfare Act, for instance, does not cover rats, mice, birds, and reptiles. Coverage of farm animals, such as pigs, sheep and goats, is also unclear under the Act. [State law (G.L. c. 140, Sec. 174D) is applicable only to those institutions that use dogs and cats in research, although

inspection of animals within those facilities covers "all other sentient creatures except humans" (105 CMR 910.005).]

Regarding Item 2 of Joint Recommendations which pertains to animal care and use committee membership, the definition of the unaffiliated member is vague. Although federal law requires facilities covered by the Animal Welfare Act to have an unaffiliated member, these requirements have been subject to interpretation and abuse.

The objective of having an unaffiliated member or members on an animal care and use committee is to represent the concerns of the lay public regarding the care, use and welfare of animals used in research. Any ordinance should clearly state this objective and provide that unaffiliated members must be truly independent from the research community.

The MSPCA also recommends that the number of unaffiliated members of an Animal Care and Use Committee be increased with the size of the committee. We recommend for every three individuals on the committee, there should be one who is an unaffiliated member. We do not believe one-fourth representation by the unaffiliated community to be an unreasonable goal.

Next, as to Item 4 of Joint Recommendations describing the

duties of the Commissioner of Laboratory Animals, it should be specified in the ordinance that the Commissioner make at least one "unannounced" visit to each research institution per year.

Item 6 of the Joint Recommendations stipulates information to be provided to the Commissioner of Laboratory Animals by the Animal Care and Use Committee.

Under the first category requiring the reporting of animals used in research, it should stipulate that "the number and species of all animals used in the previous year" be reported.

Under the third category requiring identification of the unaffiliated member of the Animal Care and Use Committee, it should be changed to read "the name and occupation of all members of the committee". This wording change would ensure that the committee's representation is equitable and compatible with the recommendations made under a previously mentioned section of the Blue Ribbon Committee's joint recommendations concerning committee membership.

We suggest adding to this section the following requirements:

(1) Committee shall provide documentation that all euthanasia has been performed in compliance with the AVMA's most recent Panel on Euthanasia recommendations; and

(2) Committee shall provide information on institutional training programs that instruct personnel in the proper care and use of animals, including all laws governing animal care and use.

Inclusion of these additional provisions is vital in order to correct deficiencies noted in the Blue Ribbon Committee's report of 2/24/89 to the City Council. It has been the MSPCA's experience that lack of knowledge of laws and regulations governing animal experimentation by research personnel is widespread throughout the state and can lead to problems in the handling or treatment of animals. ~~//////~~

The MSPCA commends the Blue Ribbon Committee and the City Council for their work in addressing the concerns of the citizens of Cambridge regarding the care, use and welfare of research animals. (Acting on the recommendations of your committee, we are confident that the Council will enact an ordinance that will benefit the research community, the general public and the animals.



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1989 MAY 25 AM 11:41

CAMBRIDGE MA.

May 23, 1989

City Clerk's Office
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to you to request permission for me to speak before the Cambridge City Council on Monday, June 5th, 1989 at the hearing regarding animals in biomedical research. I will be speaking on behalf of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gus W. Thornton
President

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Comm. from Dr. Gus W. Thornton, President, MSPCA, requesting permission to address the Council at this evening's hearing regarding the use of animals in biomedical research.

In City Council,

June 5, 1989

6-5-89

Referred to the
Hearing at 6:00 PM.
on 6-5-89.