

STATEMENT BY SENATOR BOB DOLE
BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY ADDRESS THE "HUMANE CARE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUBSTITUTES FOR ANIMALS IN RESEARCH ACT" AND THANK CONGRESSMAN WAXMAN FOR SCHEDULING THIS MORNING'S SESSION. THIS GIVES US AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS A PROBLEM THAT HAS BEEN ATTRACTING CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION THE PAST YEAR.

MOST EVERYONE FEELS THAT HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS IS A NOBLE AIM AND A NECESSARY RESPONSIBILITY. SOME HAVE ADVOCATED DRASTIC CHANGE AND SOME NO CHANGE. I BELIEVE THAT BOTH SIDES ARE IN AGREEMENT ON SEVERAL POINTS AND PERHAPS WE CAN SATISFY THE CONCERNS OF THE INTERESTED PARTIES FOLLOWING THIS HEARING.

I HAVE INTRODUCED LEGISLATION IN THE SENATE, S. 2948, AND WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS TWO PROVISIONS OF THAT BILL, ACCREDITATION AND ALTERNATIVE METHODS.

ACCREDITATION

AS AMENDED, S. 2948 WOULD HAVE THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES CONDUCT A STUDY, OF NOT MORE THAN ONE YEAR, TO DETERMINE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MANDATORY ACCREDITATION ON RESEARCH LABS. FOLLOWING THE STUDY, THE SECRETARY WILL ISSUE REGULATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE LOWEST COST PHASES OF ACCREDITATION AND WOULD

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ESTABLISH GOALS AND PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE HIGHER COST ASPECTS OF ACCREDITATION SUCH AS MAJOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES.

IF THE SECRETARY DETERMINES THAT ACCREDITATION COSTS ARE TOO HIGH, HE CAN WAIVE THE REGULATIONS. THIS AMENDMENT SHOULD SATISFY THE CONCERNS OF THOSE WHO FEEL THAT COSTS OF ACCREDITATION WOULD BE TOO HIGH. YET IT ENSURES THAT PROPER AND REASONABLE STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TOWARDS ACCREDITATION.

ALTERNATIVES

ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES OF LABORATORY ANIMAL RESEARCH LEGISLATION BEING CONSIDERED BY BOTH THE HOUSE AND SENATE IS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF LAB ANIMALS USED IN RESEARCH TESTING.

MANY REALIZE THE IMPORTANT ROLE ANIMAL RESEARCH HAS HAD OVER THE YEARS IN IMPROVING OUR HEALTH AND STANDARD OF LIVING. THE DISCOVERY OF INSULIN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CORONARY BYPASS SURGICAL TECHNIQUES ARE TWO EXAMPLES. HOWEVER, ALTERNATIVE METHODS HAVE ALSO YIELDED MAJOR BREAKTHROUGHS SUCH AS THE AMES TEST, NOW USED IN 2,000 LABORATORIES. ANOTHER EXAMPLE WAS A CHEMICAL COMMONLY USED AS A PRESERVATIVE IN SAUSAGE IN JAPAN WAS FOUND TO BE CARCINOGENIC WHEN TESTED WITH ALTERNATIVE METHODS ALTHOUGH INITIAL TESTING WITH RODENTS HAD NOT REVEALED THAT DANGER. SO I'M SUGGESTING IT IS IN EVERYONE'S BEST INTEREST TO TAKE A MORE ORGANIZED APPROACH IN LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES, RATHER THAN HAVING ALTERNATIVE METHODS DEVELOP ON A RANDOM BASIS AS A SPINOFF OF OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS.

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THOSE INVOLVED IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH WOULD PROBABLY AGREE THAT IT COSTS A LOT OF MONEY TO BREED, HOUSE AND CARE FOR ANIMALS - NOT TO MENTION THE COSTS OF FACILITIES AND TRAINED LABOR. FROM AN ECONOMIC STANDPOINT THEN, ALTERNATIVE METHODS COULD PROVE TO BE A VERY COST-EFFECTIVE INVESTMENT. AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE, I CAN TESTIFY THAT TAXPAYERS LIKE COST-EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS. I REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF GAINING SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE TO BETTER CURE, TREAT AND UNDERSTAND HUMAN DISEASES. AND I UNDERSTAND THAT MUCH OF THE RESEARCH AND TESTING INVOLVING ANIMALS SIMPLY CAN'T BE REPLACED BY COMPUTER MODELS AND TISSUE AND CELL CULTURES. HOWEVER, TO THE EXTENT FEASIBLE AND PRACTICABLE, WE SHOULD CONSIDER USING ALTERNATIVES AND TAKING AN ORGANIZED APPROACH TOWARDS THEIR DEVELOPMENT.

CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION, I REPEAT THAT ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THIS DEBATE MAY NOT BE FAR APART. BOTH SIDES OPPOSE UNPRODUCTIVE EXPERIMENTS AND NEEDLESS SUFFERING AND BOTH FAVOR DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE METHODOLOGIES WHEREVER POSSIBLE. NO ONE SHOULD WANT TO IMPEDE SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS OR SACRIFICE THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MEDICINES NEEDED FOR HUMANS. LET'S JUST BE CERTAIN AS WE CAN, THAT WE HAVE A REALISTIC AND UNIFORM SET OF STANDARDS FOR THE CARE OF ANIMALS.