



Quality Life Through Research

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President

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Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

May 12, 2011

The Honorable _____
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

As the largest coalition of biomedical research associations in the United States, representing 23 societies and over 100,000 scientists and engineers, the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) is writing to urge you to withdraw your support for the *Great Ape Protection and Cost Savings Act* (H.R. 1513). As you know, this bill would ban medical research involving bonobos, gorillas, gibbons, orangutans, and chimpanzees based in part on the questionable premise that doing so would save money. Please do not be misled by the addition of the “cost savings” language in the title of the bill. The vast majority of the savings would be attributable to cutting research grants involving chimpanzees—not for their care. The cost to the American people of not continuing this important research hugely outweighs the dubious savings alluded to in the bill.

Numerous laws, regulations, and voluntary accreditation organizations ensure that research involving great apes is subject to thorough ethical consideration and rigorous oversight. Prior to any study involving great apes, a committee determines whether the study question being asked is scientifically sound, determines whether the animal model proposed is the most appropriate to answer the study question, ensures that pain and distress of the animal is minimized, and makes certain that the animals are cared for humanely. For example, the Animal Welfare Act requires that chimpanzees in a laboratory setting be socially housed with other chimpanzees and be provided with environmental enrichments such as perches, mirrors, and swings. And in most research facilities, chimpanzees have access to outdoor space. Further, federal laws mandated the creation of sanctuaries to house chimpanzees no longer being utilized in research. Within these sanctuaries, chimpanzees are housed in social groups and provided with a high level of veterinary care until their natural deaths.

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Enacting the *Great Ape Protection and Cost Savings Act* would not only prohibit research that benefits humans, it would also prohibit research for the benefit of great apes. Chimpanzees and gorillas in the wild are being ravaged by the Ebola virus. This past February, the first studies were conducted on laboratory chimpanzees to test the safety of a potential vaccine against Ebola, which could be used to protect wild chimpanzees and gorillas from this deadly disease. If adopted, this bill will not only prevent the needed research for human diseases, but it will prevent research for these animals—inevitably harming the ones the legislation seeks to protect.

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Respectfully,



William T. Talman, MD
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William T. Talman, MD
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