

May 19, 2004

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch  
Chair, Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hatch:

I wish to express my wholehearted thanks on behalf of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) for your recent actions drawing attention to the harmful effects of animal rights extremism. You have always been a tremendous champion of biomedical research and the 22 scientific societies and more than 65,000 researchers of FASEB are grateful for your continued support.

As you stated in your recent hearing on "Animal Rights–Activism vs. Criminality," the use of animal models in biomedical research is absolutely essential to our ability to advance towards treatments and cures for those suffering from debilitating diseases. Progress in treatments for diabetes, heart disease, cancer, HIV / AIDS and Parkinson's disease would not have been possible without the humane use of animals. Moreover, animal research directly benefits animals themselves: the majority of veterinary advances are a direct result of research involving animal models.

The recent escalation in violence and intimidation campaigns directed towards researchers and their institutions is of great concern to our members. We applaud your efforts to curtail this dangerous fringe element of activism. FASEB sincerely hopes that Congress will do everything in its power to provide law enforcement agencies with the tools necessary to protect scientists, research institutions and third-party associates from becoming victims of these relentless and terrifying campaigns.

The moving and personal testimony presented at the May 12 hearing was but a small introduction to what has become a serious impediment to the progress of biomedical research, as well as to the peace of mind of scientists themselves. Biomedical researchers are dedicated to improving the health, well-being and productivity of all people. They should be allowed to do so in safety and security.

Chairman Hatch, thank you again for your strong statements on this important issue and if there is any way in which FASEB may be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Wells, Ph.D.  
FASEB President