

Shedding Light on Animal Research:

Support A.B. 889, the California Transparency in Research Act

**Physicians
Committee**
for Responsible Medicine



SCIL
Social Compassion
in Legislation



Billions of dollars in public money are spent each year on research that involves dogs, cats, and other animals. But taxpayers have no way of knowing how many animals are used in laboratories.

A.B. 889 would:

- Cover general categories of how animals are used
- Modernize California's unique Laboratory Animal Use Approval Program, a reporting system overseen by the California Department of Public Health since 1951
- Collect from laboratories information on the number of animals used by species, for what purposes they were used, and what degree of pain and distress the animals experienced
- Post collected information online for public viewing

As many as
100 million animals
are used in U.S. laboratories every year.

Fewer than 10% of those animals are covered by the Animal Welfare Act and reported to the federal government.

Numerous polls demonstrate that the public is now more concerned about the use of animals in laboratories than ever before. Yet the federal government has made it increasingly difficult in recent years to find out what happens inside laboratories—going so far as to shut down an online database in 2017. In contrast, since 1951, California has maintained a reporting system for some facilities using animals in experiments, but that system only applies to about one-third of the state's more than 300 laboratories.

With the federal government falling down on the job, California must expand its reporting system to ensure the public has a more accurate view of what occurs inside animal research facilities.

Taxpayers have a right to know how animals are used in experiments, especially when those experiments are often funded by federal agencies and conducted at public institutions.

Myths and Facts about A.B. 889, the California Transparency in Research Act

Myth: *This bill would burden research facilities with excess paperwork.*

Fact: Laboratories already commonly file records with state and federal agencies to maintain compliance. Further, the annual form will be short and request information that laboratories easily have at their disposal.

Myth: *This bill would require that research facilities stop using animals until the Department of Public Health has approved the animal use.*

Fact: Nothing about the current application and approval process will change. The Laboratory Animal Use Approval Program operates as a reporting system, and that would remain true under A.B. 889.

Myth: *The federal government already collects the information covered by this bill.*

Fact: Fewer than 10 percent of the estimated 100 million animals used in U.S. laboratories are covered by the federal Animal Welfare Act and thus reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The National Institutes of Health requires only a rough estimate of the numbers of animals used in laboratories that receive agency funding, and that information can only be obtained by the public through cumbersome and time-consuming Freedom of Information Act requests.

Myth: *This bill would reveal proprietary research information.*

Fact: A.B. 889 only covers general categories of how animals are used. It would not require the collection of specific information that could be considered proprietary.

Myth: *California's animal research facilities already report information to the state.*

Fact: The California Laboratory Animal Use Approval Program covers only about one-third of all laboratories in the state (106 facilities) using animals for research, testing, or the training of scientists or healthcare providers. There are approximately 200 additional laboratories that are currently not covered by the program.

Myth: *USDA already maintains an online database on the use of animals in laboratories.*

Fact: USDA's database only covers a small fraction of animals used in laboratories. Also, the agency's database was shut down without warning in 2017, and a significant number of records have yet to be restored.

Myth: *The reporting requirement would put the safety of animal researchers at risk.*

Fact: The California Laboratory Animal Use Approval Program has been in existence since 1951. In addition, A.B. 889 does not request the reporting of individual research project titles or researcher names.



California has more than
300 laboratories
 using animals in experiments.
 Two-thirds of those facilities
 do *not* report to the state.