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ASSEMBLYMAN, SEVENTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT

Assembly Bill 889

The California Transparency in Research Act

Background

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.

Numerous polls demonstrate that the public is now more concerned about the use of animals in laboratories than ever before. 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.

Current Law

Under current law, laboratories already commonly file records with state and federal agencies to maintain compliance. However, the number of animals and laboratories that are covered by animal protection legislation and programs is still small.

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.

The California Laboratory Animal Use Approval Program covers only about one-third of all laboratories in the state (approximately 115 facilities) using animals for research, testing, or the training of scientists or healthcare providers. There are approximately 215 additional laboratories that are currently not covered by the program.

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

This Bill

This Bill will:

- Cover general categories of how animals are used.
- Modernize California's unique Laboratory Animal Use Approval Program, an application and reporting system overseen by the California Department of Public Health since 1951
- Establish a first-of-its-kind publicly accessible and searchable online database on the use of animals in research, testing, and the training of scientists and healthcare providers.
- 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

Sponsor

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine
Social Compassion in Legislation

Staff

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