



NJABR Opposes A-4385

The New Jersey Association for Biomedical Research (NJABR) opposes Assembly Bill No. 4385, *requires institutions of higher education to offer cats and dogs no longer used for educational, research, or scientific purposes to animal rescue organizations for adoption.*

NJABR is an advocacy organization seeking to promote the continued improvement of laboratory animal welfare and the public understanding of the importance of animal-based research to scientific advancement. NJABR's members include New Jersey's academic institutions, pharmaceutical companies and the many vendors and suppliers who make such important research possible.

We support the re-homing of laboratory animals when possible. However, A-4385 creates health and safety risks to humans, pets, and laboratory animals by mandating relinquishment of cats and dogs that were involved in biomedical research in carefully controlled environments where they are cared for humanely, pursuant to the Animal Welfare Act and other governing federal law to completely unregulated organizations—animal rescue organizations. This bill is not only unnecessary, since New Jersey's research institutions have successful, robust adoption programs from which hundreds of animals have been re-homed, this bill exposes these institutions to unreasonable liability because it provides for none of the safe guards already in place to ensure that only healthy, behaviorally sound dogs and cats are re-homed.

Research institutions have carefully developed customized adoption policies and procedures for the retirement of dogs, cats as well as other research animals, in partnership with organizations and individuals familiar with the obstacles encountered when placing research animals in homes. This process involves in depth consideration of each potential re-homed animal, the types of studies the animal has been involved in, the suitability of the animal for adoption based on medical and behavioral assessment; training required for both the animal and new owner to ensure a smooth transition; and a host of other factors. The adoption of research animals is already widely embraced by the research community, and decisions about how and when to do so are handled by highly qualified experts at the research institution.

Also of significant concern to the research community, the Beagle Freedom Project, the group behind many state initiatives recently introduced to require the adoption of research dogs, is not a coalition of warm, animal friendly advocates. The Beagle Freedom Project has a well-documented history of misleading the public and using animals obtained from research facilities as props to promote its anti-research positions. In fact, the Beagle Freedom Project proudly announces that the group's ultimate goal is to end animal-based scientific research far too soon before science brings us to that laudable innovation.

The Beagle Freedom Project has a militant past. In fact, the key leader of the Beagle Freedom Project is a convicted felon, who spent more than five years in federal prison for crimes committed as part of the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaign. As the New York Times notes, The SHAC group "often posted on its Web site the names and ages of employees' spouses and children and the names of the children's schools and various athletic fields where they were scheduled to play." In addition, they "posted, as part of the campaign, what it called the "top 20 terror tactics" to be used against companies and individuals, including invading offices, chaining gates shut, writing graffiti on cars and houses, flooding houses with garden hoses, smashing windows and sending defective e-mail messages in attempts to disrupt computers.

Governor Christie prosecuted and convicted the SHAC criminals when he was the U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey and we cannot allow these individuals to regain legitimacy, especially in New Jersey, whose residents were among those targeted by these criminals. Advancing legislation named after the Beagle Freedom Project provides credibility to these individuals.

Thank you for considering NJABR's views on this important issue.
