

PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

## Written Public Testimony for the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Submitted by:

Emily R. Trunnell, Ph.D.

Director, Science Advancement and Outreach

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

Re: FY27 Appropriations for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Dear Members of the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding critical issues related to the upcoming NIH budget, funding portfolio, and the direction of biomedical research in the United States. In line with the Subcommittee's priorities, PETA is committed to advancing science-driven decision-making, promoting innovative research models, and eliminating animal suffering.

In the past year, NIH has made notable progress toward expanding human-based research models and increasing funding for non-animal methods. But significant roadblocks remain. These include the agency's ongoing delay in eliminating wasteful and unethical spending on animal programs and experiments that do not translate to human health, its lack of response to serious issues in its funding of animal experiments in foreign laboratories, and its unfulfilled promises—made over a year ago—to increase transparency regarding its pledged reduction of animal use in NIH-funded research.

**To improve the health of Americans, rebuild public trust in NIH, maintain U.S. leadership in biomedical innovation, and reduce animal suffering, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee provide sufficient funding and clear direction to enable NIH to take the following actions, and to brief the Subcommittee on its progress no later than 180 days following the release of these funds.**

1. Issue no new funding for the National Primate Research Centers (NPRCs) and facilitate the transition of this infrastructure and expertise toward human-relevant, non-animal methods, including a plan for responsible long-term care or sanctuary placement of existing animals, and prohibitions of primate breeding and acquisition during the transition period.

### Washington

1536 16th St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-483-PETA

### Los Angeles

2624 W. Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
323-644-PETA

### Norfolk

501 Front St.  
Norfolk, VA 23510  
757-622-PETA

Info@peta.org  
PETA.org

### Entities

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

- For six decades, the NPRCs have failed to deliver on their promise of advancing human health. NIH spends nearly \$100 million annually just in the indirect costs required to operate these facilities, which breed and experiment on thousands of monkeys. All seven NPRCs have been repeatedly cited by the USDA for violations of the Animal Welfare Act, demonstrating persistent problems with inadequate oversight and animal care. These systemic failures—combined with well-recognized biological differences between humans and other primates—help explain the NPRCs’ poor translational record. In addition, the NPRCs pose a public health risk, as primates destined for laboratories can **and have** harbored and transmitted infectious agents across state lines.
  - Redirecting these funds toward human-relevant, non-animal research would yield medical advancements, protect public health, reduce animal suffering, and provide American taxpayer with a better return on investment.
2. Prohibit the use of funds made available by this Act for experiments on animals conducted by foreign institutions, including for the issuance, review, approval, or maintenance of Animal Welfare Assurances for such foreign institutions.
    - Between fiscal years 2011 and 2021, NIH gave approximately \$2.2 billion to 200 foreign organizations to fund 1,357 grants and contracts involving experiments on animals. These funds went to 45 countries, including those known to have poor animal welfare standards. Because these extramural grants are awarded to entities outside of U.S. oversight, NIH does not conduct laboratory inspections or require inspections by local regulatory authorities, nor does it require these institutions to report on violations of U.S. policies or have functioning ethics review boards.
    - NIH has failed to independently restrict funding for these practices. Congressional action is needed to ensure ethical standards and accountability for taxpayer funds.
  3. Accelerate the creation of the Office of Research Innovation, Validation, and Application (ORIVA) and ensure the office has the authority needed to facilitate and coordinate the transition away from conducting and funding experiments on animals across all NIH institutes and centers. Require ORIVA to provide regular, transparent reporting on progress toward this goal.
    - In April 2025, NIH promised the American public it would reduce the use of animals in NIH-funded research, prioritize human-based research, coordinate these efforts across the agency, and be transparent and accountable to taxpayers regarding its progress toward these goals. One year later, the promised ORIVA still does not exist. It is apparent that Congressional direction is needed to ensure ORIVA’s creation, empower its mandate, and enforce accountability through transparent reporting.
  4. Prohibit the use of funds made available by this Act for xenotransplantation research or preclinical trials.

- NIH continues to fund xenotransplantation despite the existence of safer and more feasible opportunities to increase access to transplantable human organs. Human organs remain the most compatible and effective option, yet inefficiencies in the current system result in substantial waste (approximately one in five donor kidneys and one in ten donor livers are procured but never transplanted). Improving the performance of the existing systems will yield immediate benefits, while creating a separate xenotransplantation system would require substantial new federal oversight and funding, adding complexity and inefficiency and consuming resources that could instead be used to address existing structural failures.
  - Xenotransplantation also poses serious public-health risks, including the transmission of animal-borne pathogens to immunosuppressed transplant recipients and potentially to the broader community. Even with genetic modification, pathogen-free facilities, and screening, dangerous viruses have been detected in donor pigs.
  - Promising technological advancements—such as tissue engineering and bioprinting using patients’ own cells—will remain underfunded if resources are instead allocated to xenotransplantation. Redirecting NIH funding toward these human-relevant approaches (and requiring that they also avoid animal use) would offer safer and more sustainable solutions to the organ shortage.
5. Prohibit the use funds made available by this Act for animal experimentation in disease areas where experiments on animals have demonstrated poor predictive value for human outcomes—including but not limited to cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, gastrointestinal disorders, nerve regeneration, neurodegenerative diseases, neuropsychiatric conditions and neurodivergence, sepsis, stroke, substance use disorder, and women’s health. Require that funds made available under this Act only be used to support human-relevant, non-animal research approaches in these areas.
- Despite acknowledging that certain areas of research have not been effective in translating the results of experiments on animals to human diseases, NIH continues to spend billions funding these same failed models. It is clear that Congressional action is needed to redirect funding toward human-relevant, non-animal methods to improve research effectiveness, speed the development of treatments and cures, and avoid the waste of finite public resources.
  - At the very least, the Subcommittee should prohibit NIH from using the funds made available by this Act to fund or conduct poorly predictive rodent behavioral paradigms, such as the forced swim test and tail suspension test. These tests are harmful to animals, have poor predictive value for human mental health outcomes, and are not required by any federal agency. The forced swim test has been banned or restricted in the U.K., Ireland, and parts of Australia, and at least 18 companies—including the world’s top pharmaceutical companies—and 40 universities around the world have committed to ending its use. Yet NIH still funds at least 40 active projects that include the forced swim test.

6. Require that funds made available by this Act be used to conduct or commission independent, systematic reviews of NIH-funded experiments on animals in additional areas of research not named above, including assessments of translational success, reproducibility, and return on investment. The findings should be used to identify additional areas for discontinuation and inform future funding priorities and strategic planning.
  - NIH has not systematically reviewed the effectiveness or translational value of experiments on animals across all research areas, yet it continues to fund them. Congress can direct NIH to make these unbiased evaluations and use the results to inform evidence-based funding decisions, improve strategic planning, increase the quality of taxpayer-funded research, and ensure resources are used effectively.
7. Expand training, career development awards, and transition grants in human-relevant, non-animal methods, and make these available to early-career scientists and established investigators seeking to transition their laboratories away from animal use.
  - As this Subcommittee recognizes, support for early-career scientists is critical for the U.S. to build a workforce equipped for modern biomedical research. Yet many NIH training and research funding opportunities are still heavily animal-based, despite the well-known problems with translation and replicability of experiments on animals. Researchers trained in the use of animal models often lack the time, funding, or institutional support to re-train in emerging, human-relevant research technologies.
  - By directing NIH to prioritize non-animal methods training for early-career researchers and offer re-training for established investigators, Congress can ensure that American researchers are able to compete with a rapidly changing scientific landscape and respond to calls for improved translation of biomedical research findings into human health advancements.

## **Conclusion**

Health and medical science are at a critical juncture, and decisions made by this Subcommittee can shape the direction of biomedical research for decades to come. Prioritizing reproducible and translatable animal-free science will enable Congress and NIH to maintain American leadership in biomedical research and ensure taxpayer dollars support research that is ethical, accountable, and effective.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. PETA entities have the largest scientific staff of any animal protection organization in the world. Our scientists have a proven track record of productively assisting many Fortune 100 corporations as well as regulatory and government agencies. This assistance includes providing expert opinions, regulatory advice, and technical support in a broad range of fields. We are available to answer any questions and to further discuss these recommendations with the Subcommittee. You can reach me at [EmilyT@peta.org](mailto:EmilyT@peta.org).