

NATIONAL ANTI-VIVISECTION SOCIETY
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February 6, 2024

ATTN: In support of H. 7234 to prioritize human-based medical training.

Dear Chair Donovan, Vice Chair Giraldo, Second Vice Chair Potter, and esteemed members of the House Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island-based supporters of the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS), I am writing to ask for your support for H. 7234. This bill will prohibit a medical training program from using live animals if another accredited training program in the same medical discipline does not use animals, or if an alternative teaching method exists.

NAVS is a non-profit charitable organization founded in 1929 to work towards ending the suffering of animals in research, testing and education. Thanks to advancements in the development of human-relevant alternatives, the medical training field is an area where our humane science message is met with support across party lines and among Americans of all ages.

Below are a few of the reasons humane medical legislation, such as H. 7234, makes sense.

Superior alternatives exist to train students.

Thanks to a confluence of factors, including technological advancements and heightened public awareness, a paradigm shift has taken place that has seen the nearly full replacement of animal use in civilian medical school curricula and skills-training programs. These advancements have replaced medical training using animals with superior techniques such as training simulators and partial task trainers. Studies have shown that medical training simulators, which can feature flowing blood, breakable bones, and layers of skin, muscle and fat, improve skill acquisition and retention just as well as animal subjects^{1,2}.

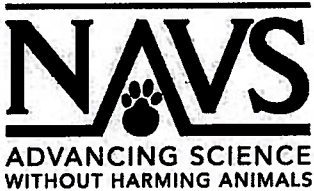
With humane options that accurately model human patients, improve technical proficiency, improve patient and medical provider safety, foster development of higher cognitive skills, mimic realistic clinical scenarios, and shorten medical trainees' learning curves, there is no excuse to continue the archaic and inhumane use of animals in medical training programs³.

Human-centered medical training is the way of the future.

¹ Balcombe J. Medical training using simulation: toward fewer animals and safer patients. *Altern Lab Anim.* 2004 Jun;32 Suppl 1B:553-60. doi: 10.1177/026119290403201s90. PMID: 23581135.

² Patronek G.J. and A. Rauch (2007). Systematic review of comparative studies examining alternatives to the harmful use of animals in biomedical education. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 230(1), pp.37-43.

³ Pawlowski, J., Feinstein, D., Crandall, M. L., & Gala, S. (2019). "Modernizing Biomedical Training: Replacing Live Animal Laboratories with Human Simulation". In *Animal Experimentation: Working Towards a Paradigm Change*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004391192_023



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One of the largest animal use policy changes in biomedical training came from India, which, in 2014, after decades of requiring medical students to perform experiments on approximately 1.5 to 2 million live animals each year, changed its Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) program regulations to replace the use of animals in medical training methods⁴. The decision was replicated by numerous councils around the country – Pharmacy Council of India, Dental Council of India and more – potentially saving thousands of animals every year. Beyond India, the UK prohibits surgical training on live animals, and 22 NATO nations, including 19 European Union Member States, have confirmed that they do not use animals for live tissue training. In the United States, 198 general surgery residency programs use only nonanimal methods, compared to 61 such programs that still use animals, according to the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

These figures indicate that society is moving towards the eventual phase out of animal subjects in medical training. Passage of H. 7234 will help Rhode Island come in line with the most up-to-date medical training methods.

On behalf of the millions of animal advocates in this country, the visionary scientists who have labored to develop innovative nonanimal training methods, and the grateful animals who will be spared needless suffering, we respectfully ask for your support of H. 7234.

Thank you for all you do to advance greater protection for animals through the legislative process. Please reach out if you have any questions regarding this legislation or if you would like more information regarding humane medical training and the work we do at NAVS.

Sincerely,

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⁴ DNA Correspondent (2014). Medical Council of India Stops Use of Animals for Training UG Medical Students. Daily News & Analysis. [online] Available at: <http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report-medical-council-of-india-stops-use-of-animals-for-training-ug-medical-students-1981373>