



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

February 7, 2024

House Committee on Health and Human Services
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: SUPPORT for House Bill 7234

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our supporters in Rhode Island, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 7234. This legislation would simply require the use of alternatives to live animal procedures in medical school training when an alternative training method is available that (1) is used by at least one other accredited medical school in the state or (2) teaches the medical procedure or lesson without the use of a live animal. The bill applies only to medical education and training of students in medical school. The bill does not prohibit the use of animal tests to comply with requirements of state or federal agencies.

In medical schools, live animals are used in teaching labs for surgery, physiology and pharmacology classes. These labs can include anesthetizing the animal, injecting pharmaceuticals or practicing surgical techniques. After the class, the animal is killed. Dogs, pigs, goats and sheep are commonly used in medical training.

Fortunately, there are several alternatives to the use of animals for medical training. Computer-based methods and anatomical simulators are being used for teaching everything from basic physiology to hands-on trauma care and microsurgical techniques. Specific examples of alternatives include human patient simulators (such as the TraumaMan System®), computerized mannequins, surgical and microsurgical training boards, perfusion models, laparoscopy simulators, and a wide range of computer platforms for learning anatomy, physiology (cardiovascular, pulmonary, renal, etc.), and gastrointestinal and muscle function. The development of alternatives to live animals for education and training offers enhanced potential for the customization and repeatability of learning exercises.

Clinical apprenticeships provide a critical alternative to the use of live animals in medical training. The student trains in the true human patient setting, being gradually given more responsibility and involvement as student competency improves. This portion of medical training places the student in the real-life situations he/she will encounter as a professional practitioner. Exposure to real surgery in the operating room theater is obviously a vital component of surgical training. Some medical schools send their students to local area hospitals and trauma centers, where they observe and study surgical procedures in the operating room. Observing operating room procedures helps medical students understand what it takes to apply medicine to real-world situations that help save and improve human lives.

By passing this legislation, Rhode Island will help prevent animal suffering and will ensure a superior and more holistic training experience for students. Thank you for your time and consideration of our support for House Bill 7234.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vicki Katrinak".

Vicki Katrinak
Director, Animal Research and Testing
The Humane Society of the United States