

SUPPORT: H. 823, S. 505

An Act concerning the use of animals in product testing

Sponsors: Representative Jack Patrick Lewis and Senator Mark Montigny

Status: Referred to Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture

Summary: Every year, tens of thousands of animals suffer and die in product testing in the U.S. In common toxicity testing, harsh chemicals are applied to an animal's skin, forced down their throat or into their lungs, and dripped into their eyes—and pain relief is frequently withheld. These refiled bills would require manufacturers and their contract testing facilities to use test methods that replace, reduce, or refine animal testing of products and ingredients *when they are available and provide information of equivalent or better scientific quality and relevance for the intended purpose*. The legislation applies to products such as cosmetics, household cleaners, and industrial chemicals, like those in paint; it does not apply to testing done for medical research, including testing of drugs or medical devices.



Background: 21st century science is rapidly moving away from outdated animal tests as many faster, less expensive, and more human-relevant alternative methods have become available, including artificial human tissue, organs-on-chips, and sophisticated computer programs. This shift toward non-animal methods builds on recommendations of the U.S. National Research Council's 2007 report, *Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century*, which lays the groundwork for a “paradigm shift” in safety testing, and also conforms with the bipartisan-supported 2016 Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety of the 21st Century Act, which includes provisions to minimize animal testing.

Non-animal test methods save time and money. Non-animal alternatives provide more efficient as well as more effective chemical safety assessment. Human cell-based tests and advanced computer models, for example, deliver human-relevant results in hours or days, unlike some animal tests that can take months or years. As technologies continue to improve, alternative methods will become progressively more cost-effective, while animal tests will inevitably remain slow and expensive.

Animal tests do not ensure human safety. No longer considered the gold standard of product testing, animal models carry serious scientific limitations. Different species can respond differently when exposed to the same chemicals, and even different sexes or sub-species can react inconsistently. Consequently, results from animal tests may not be relevant to humans, under- or over-estimating health hazards. Alternative methods, based on human biology, are much more likely to provide results predictive of human responses.

Animals suffer in product tests. Every year, tens of thousands of animals suffer and die in product testing in the U.S. Thousands of animals may be used for a single test and they often suffer for months or years before being euthanized. Further, 95% of animals used in research and testing in the U.S. are not protected by the minimal standards of the Animal Welfare Act, as mice, rats, and birds are specifically excluded from its provisions.

Massachusetts is a scientific and technological leader in non-animal alternatives. Massachusetts consistently ranks as a top research dollars recipient of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which, in its 2016-2020 strategic plan, stresses the importance of replacing animal testing models with scientifically superior alternative methods. As a top grant recipient, the Commonwealth has a vested interest in aligning its scientific goals and practices with those of the NIH. New York, New Jersey, California, and Virginia, other top NIH research grant recipients, have already passed laws similar to this legislation. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts should join in leading the way in adopting 21st century approaches to product safety testing.



Sources and Additional Resources

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