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Canton, MI 48187

January 24, 2024

Representative Reggie Miller  
Chair, House Agriculture Committee  
Michigan Legislature

***Re: Support HB 4849, Agriculture Committee Meeting, January 24, 2024***

Dear Chair Miller, Committee Members, and Representative Koleszar:

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

My name is Beatrice Friedlander, and I am the president of the Board of Directors of Michigan-based Attorneys for Animals, Inc., a non-profit and 501(c)(3) organization of legal professionals and animal advocates. Its Board of Directors voted to support HB 4849.

I was a founding member of the Animal Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan. During my more than 40 years of legal experience, I have been a guest lecturer at the University of Michigan, Wayne State University, and Michigan State University. I am an Adjunct Associate Professor at Madonna University in Livonia, teaching Animal Law and Policies. I also served on the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Companion Animal Advisory Committee from 2003 to 2005.

I am here to support House Bill 4849.

Michigan already has the legal authority to regulate the humane use of animals in laboratories, and it has since 1978. Attorney General Nessel affirmed that in 2022 with an official opinion. At the very least, we can start by ensuring that experiments involving dogs are conducted humanely, and that means prohibiting the infliction of pain on dogs. More specifically, our public institutions have an obligation to reflect the ethics of the taxpayers who fund them. As Representative Koleszar said, Michiganders are overwhelmingly opposed to the use of dogs in painful experiments – especially when conducted at public institutions. When voters are clearly so united against something, it is the Legislature's duty to act.

More and more, individual states are stepping in to regulate the use of animals in labs because the federal government is falling down on the job. In 2022, Harvard Law School [sued](#) the U.S.

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Department of Agriculture for secretly handing over much of the responsibility of regulating labs to an industry-backed third party. The case is still pending. The esteemed journal *Science* [reported](#) that, because of the policy, some labs are only being partially inspected; in March 2023, [a judge in a separate case ruled that this policy was arbitrary and capricious](#). In 2021, *National Geographic* [reported](#) that USDA was ignoring animal welfare violations in favor of business interests.

Clearly, the federal government has demonstrated the inability to ensure that animals in labs are humanely treated. And even if the Animal Welfare Act were properly enforced, it still fully allows for painful experiments. But House Bill 4849 provides the opportunity to fill this gap, and to stand up for ethical research.

Very Truly Yours,



Beatrice M. Friedlander, JD  
President