

Michigan Veterinary Medical Association

Statement on House Bill 4849 (Queenie's Law)

Michigan House Committee on Agriculture
November 13, 2024

The Michigan Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA) is one of the most progressive veterinary associations in the country, representing nearly 2,300 members. The MVMA has advanced the standard of veterinary care statewide since 1883. Today's veterinarians – our members - work in private practice, government, shelters, universities, and anywhere animal welfare is of concern.

The MVMA is opposed to House Bill 4849 and its companion Senate Bill 1019. The bill would essentially eliminate the use of dogs and cats in biomedical research. The bill appears to be based on the premise that researchers and institutions that use these species do so unrestrainedly and with minimal regulatory oversight. That is a false premise.

Research institutions are required to have an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). A primary consideration in IACUC deliberation includes the justification for species selection, especially for the use of more “sensitive” species in public perception. Thus, the bill disregards the existing responsibility and authority of the IACUC as dictated in federal laws and accreditation standards.

The bill also directs the establishment of “standards pertaining to the use of animals, other than dogs, for experimental purposes” and for the inspection of research/teaching institutions using animals. Such oversight is redundant with those activities being mandated by existing federal and accreditation bodies.

Passage of the bill would indiscriminately prevent the relatively rare yet vital investigations of the pathophysiology of diseases, such as cardiovascular and neurological disorders, using what is scientifically justified as the best possible animal models – now and in the future. Recent revisions to the bill would also limit its applicability to “public bodies.” This provision creates incongruity and undermines the implied premise of the bill.

The MVMA stands with the American Veterinary Medical Association in supporting responsible use of dogs and cats in biomedical research and we recommend the committee vote against House Bill 4849.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnifer Ballard, CEO of MVMA

Resources:

- AVMA Policy [Use of animals in research, testing, and education](#)
- AVMA Policy [Use of random-source dogs and cats for research, testing, and education](#)
- Canine Research in the Department for Veterans Affairs
https://www.research.va.gov/programs/animal_research/canine_research/VA-Canine-Research.pdf
- National Association for Biomedical Research “The Importance of Animal Research”
<https://www.nabr.org/biomedical-research/importance-biomedical-research>
- Federation for American Societies for Experimental Biology “Dog Fact Sheet”
<https://www.faseb.org/getmedia/8477a548-f661-400d-b952-09c29fe2e9b4/Dog-Fact-Sheet-Final-11-16-15.pdf>
- Understanding Animal Research “Dogs and Animal Research”
<https://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/using-animals-in-scientific-research/animal-research-species/dog>