

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 5, 2021

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G St., NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro,

We write to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) oversight of taxpayer-funded animal research at foreign institutions.

Recent reports indicate that the NIH has been funding experiments that utilize primates, dogs, mice and other animals in foreign laboratories.^{1,2} According to the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, NIH has issued permission for over 300 laboratories in 57 countries to conduct animal research with U.S. tax dollars.³ OLAW further states that foreign laboratories funded by the NIH are not required to meet U.S. standards for animal welfare or laboratory oversight.⁴ Of additional concern is that many countries receiving NIH funding have minimal or no laws or regulations governing animal research and protecting the animals used.⁵

The apparent lack of adequate oversight of foreign animal research raises serious questions about animal welfare, scientific rigor, research integrity and even national security. As the NIH has noted, a lack of rigor and transparency in animal research compromises its value and contributes to wasted time, money and animals' lives.⁶

¹ Becker, Carlin. "Zebrafish on Ecstasy and Feeding Mice Human Feces: NIH Hikes Funding for Animal Testing." *Newsweek*, 7 July 2021, www.newsweek.com/zebrafish-ecstasy-feeding-mice-human-feces-nih-hikes-funding-animal-testing-1607345.

² Erskine, Eliza. "NIH Funds Animal Testing Overseas, Per Report." *One Green Planet*, 8 July 2021, www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/nih-funds-animal-testing-overseas-per-report.

³ "Institutions with a PHS Approved Animal Welfare Assurance." *National Institutes of Health*, 2019, olaw.nih.gov/assured/app/index.html#ALL.

⁴ "Foreign Assurance, Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare." *National Institutes of Health*, 2018, olaw.nih.gov/resources/documents/foreign.htm.

⁵ "World Animal Protection: Animal Protection Index." *World Animal Protection*, 2020, api.worldanimalprotection.org.

⁶ Collins, Francis. "Statement on Enhancing Rigor, Transparency, and Translatability In Animal Research." *National Institutes of Health (NIH)*, 11 June 2021, www.nih.gov/about-nih/who-we-are/nih-director/statements/statement-enhancing-rigor-transparency-translatability-animal--research.

In light of the aforementioned concerns, we request that you review the oversight of foreign NIH-funded animal research, including, but not limited to:

- How many foreign animal research facilities are currently receiving NIH funding directly and indirectly via grants, subgrants, contracts, and other funding methods?
- How much NIH funding was sent to foreign animal research facilities over the past ten years?
- What guidelines, laws and regulations are foreign animal research facilities required to adhere to in order to be eligible for and maintain eligibility for NIH funding?
- How does NIH monitor foreign research facilities' animal care and use programs to determine whether they meet relevant standards?
- Does the NIH conduct site visits of foreign animal research facilities?
- Are foreign animal research facilities required to report animal welfare noncompliance to the NIH as U.S. facilities receiving NIH funding are required to do?
- When was the last time that guidelines for NIH-funded foreign animal research were updated? When are they next due to be reviewed, and what is the process by which this occurs? Are there opportunities for input from Congress and the public?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Jessup in Rep. Roybal-Allard's office (Debbie.Jessup@mail.house.gov) or Libby Tidwell in Rep. Mast's office (Libby.Tidwell@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Lucille Roybal-Allard
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Louie Gohmert
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Ralph Norman
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Brian Mast
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



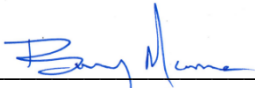
Bill Posey
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Nancy Mace
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Madeleine Dean
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Barry Moore
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Maria Elvira Salazar
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Darren Soto
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Vern Buchanan
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Guy Reschenthaler
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Diana Harshbarger
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Michelle Steel
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Fred Keller
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Claudia Tenney
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Gus Bilirakis
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Brian Fitzpatrick
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Christopher Smith
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Nicole Malliotakis
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



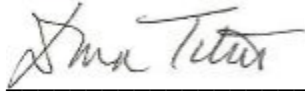
Mike Garcia
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Steve Chabot
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Mo Brooks
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Dina Titus
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Earl Blumenauer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Jeff van Drew
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Eleanor Norton
MEMBER OF CONGRESS