



IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN
VETERANS OF AMERICA

September 13, 2017

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Ranking Member
Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Schatz:

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) and our more than 400,000 members, have written to inform you that we strongly oppose H.R. 3197, the Preventing Unkind and Painful Procedures and Experiments on Respected Species (PUPPERS) Act and related amendment H.Amdt. 226 in the House-passed H.R. 3219, the Defense, Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, Legislative Branch, and Energy and Water Development National Security Appropriations Act. IAVA opposes this provision as it would eliminate research using canine subjects in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities.

The use of canine research in VA medical facilities follow national guidelines and restrictions for humane treatment of animals in research. When these guidelines are not followed, as was the case at the Hunter Holmes McGuire Medical Center in Richmond, VA, there are mechanisms in place to remediate the situation and discipline those involved.

Research conducted by the VA, including studies using canine subjects, benefit veterans and the general population. While representing a small proportion of VA animal lab use at just 0.05 percent, canine research carried out in VA facilities has led to advances in treating many chronic conditions, including heart disease and diabetes; both conditions are leading causes of death for Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. When done within the federal guidelines that codify the use of animal testing under humane conditions, the use of canine research can lead to medical breakthroughs that may be impossible without its use.



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Research is paramount in advancing veterans' quality of life and many of us are dog lovers. There are guidelines and mechanisms in place for advancing canine research and ensuring it is done humanely. If passed, this bill would diminish the VA's ability to conduct scientific research that will benefit veterans and the population at large.

It is with this in mind that we voice our opposition to H.R. 3197 and H.Amdt. 226 within H.R. 3219 provision limiting canine research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: thomas@iava.org.

Sincerely,

Tom Porter
Legislative Director
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

Cc: Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran
Senate Appropriations Committee Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy
House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson
Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Ranking Member Jon Tester
House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Phil Roe, M.D.
House Veterans Affairs Committee Ranking Member Tim Walz