

Giving Animals a Future



PETA's

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Meet Lori Kettler,
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President and Deputy
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The Public Records Laws That PETA Loves and Vivisectors Despise

When Experimenters Don't Share Information Willingly, We Drag It out of Them

As you know, investigations are the lifeblood of PETA's work. We uncover animal abuse that people *unwittingly* support so that it can be stopped. Sometimes we obtain proof of the abuse by placing a PETA eyewitness on site at a facility where it's occurring. Sometimes proof comes from whistleblowers. And sometimes we discover it by researching public records, such as those of taxpayer-funded laboratories.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and other public records laws enable us to thrust into the spotlight many of the sordid goings-on that animal experimenters so desperately want to keep under wraps. And with the support of our Augustus Club members, we wield these tools skillfully and powerfully for animals. This enables us to give crucial information to taxpayers who would otherwise not be able to hold officials accountable when laws have been violated, animals have suffered, and public money has been misused.

► Experiments Stopped Following a PETA Public Records Lawsuit

Some truly hideous experiments on monkeys were stopped after we sued the University of Massachusetts–Amherst and got the records that we demanded.

Here's what happened: In 2017, we filed a records request for videos related to experiments on monkeys overseen by UMass–Amherst experimenter Melinda Novak. The request was denied by the public university, so we filed a lawsuit in March 2019.

Since 1990, Novak has received *more than \$10 million in taxpayer funding* to study how and why monkeys mutilate themselves in laboratories. But we already know why they do this: It's because they're stressed out of their minds. After we filed suit, the university agreed to settle the case and hand over copies of all the videos.

The footage that we obtained and released showed monkeys in small metal cages pacing endlessly, tearing out their own hair, and even poking their thumbs into their own eyes. As mentioned, the purported purpose of the studies was to see how imprisonment in laboratories harms monkeys. But decades of these experiments—all showing that monkeys are traumatized and driven mad in laboratories—led to zero changes that would benefit them.

These actions led Texas A&M to stop breeding dogs to develop canine MD so that they could be used in these experiments. The lead experimenter has now retired, and dozens of the dogs have been adopted into loving homes.

But now, Novak no longer harms animals. After more than 30 years of conducting and overseeing experiments like these, she quietly retired after our lawsuit was filed.

We also pressed Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) to turn over damning video footage of taxpayer-funded experiments. The school refused to comply, so we sued. As a result, we not only forced OHSU to turn over 74 videos from “junk food” experiments on infant monkeys but also demolished its already tattered reputation by garnering media headlines such as “Oregon lab ... turning [pregnant monkeys] into nicotine and alcohol addicts.”

► **Unlocking Cages With the Public Records Key**
Our success in prying public records from the vice-like grip of vivisectors is also sparing dogs the ordeal of painful experiments at Texas A&M University. Cruel and useless canine muscular dystrophy (MD) experiments have been conducted there for nearly four decades *without producing*



a single cure for the disease or even a treatment to reverse its symptoms.

We've put massive pressure on the school, including by filing a ground-breaking First Amendment lawsuit, conducting ad blitzes, disrupting its Board of Regents meetings, holding protests, and engaging in takeovers of its football games.

These actions led Texas A&M to *stop breeding dogs* to develop canine MD so that they could be used in these experiments. The lead experimenter has now retired, and dozens of the dogs have been adopted into loving homes.

Additionally, when we asked our Augustus Club members

and other supporters to demand the release of Lucilla and Varinia, two healthy 9-year-old German shorthaired pointers who were exploited for breeding purposes for years by Texas A&M, thousands of you sent e-mails and made phone calls. Because of that, the dogs have been adopted, according to records that we've received. And in more good news, a golden retriever named Cheddar has also been adopted.

And in our most recent victory against the university, three more dogs who were caged and subjected to inhumane conditions there have been freed!

With your support, we're working to free the remaining 21 dogs still trapped at Texas A&M.



➤ **Slashing Funding, Yanking Licenses, and Changing Laws**

After we obtained public records revealing Colorado State University’s horrific experiments on birds—many of whom were illegally wild-caught—we went into attack mode. CSU experimenter Gregory Ebel has spent 13 years capturing wild crows, robins, and other birds, imprisoning them in his laboratory, infecting them with West Nile virus, and killing them—but he’s failed to develop a cure, a vaccine, or any clinical treatments for the disease caused by the virus, either for birds or humans.

In response to complaints from PETA, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) ordered that its grant money be pulled from all experiments involving the illegally caught birds, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife cited and fined Ebel and suspended his license.

And here’s another victory involving our public records sleuthing skills: After PETA and a whistleblower exposed a local animal shelter’s practice of selling both live and dead dogs to Louisiana State University’s veterinary school for use in deadly classroom training exercises and experiments, Louisiana passed a historic law. The state now bars shelters from selling live animals to laboratories for experimentation and prevents them from accepting homeless animals for the purpose of killing them and selling their bodies to laboratories. It’s hard to fathom that this was occurring, but it was. Thankfully, it has stopped.

➤ **Winning the Fight for Government Transparency**

In addition to requesting public records, we also keep tabs on those who chronically violate the federal Animal

The state now bars shelters from selling live animals to laboratories for experimentation and prevents them from accepting homeless animals for the purpose of killing them and selling their bodies to laboratories.

Welfare Act (AWA) by monitoring the records of their inspections by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This agency, which is in charge of enforcing the AWA, inspects laboratories, roadside zoos, circuses, puppy mills, and other animal-exploiting facilities.

For years, the USDA posted its inspection reports on its website, which was vital to our ability to identify and take action against AWA violators and has been critical to our success in shutting down animal laboratories and rescuing dozens of tigers, bears, and other animals from shoddy roadside zoos.

But in 2017, something terrible happened: We faced an information blackout. The USDA scrubbed from its website almost all the crucial information that was once online, including the number of animals held at each facility and the citations of abuse and neglect. This meant that thousands of animal exploiters were able to shield their AWA violations from our scrutiny and from the public.

But with the support of our Augustus Club members, we stopped the secrecy. A PETA-led coalition sued the USDA

to compel it to restore those vital records. In addition, we applied tremendous public pressure—including by generating e-mails from thousands of our supporters—and that prompted Congress to take action. *The records are now back online!* This is an enormous victory for animals and for the public’s right to ensure that the AWA is enforced.

➤ **You’re Our Secret Weapon**

The use of animals as “models” of human physiology to study disease has proved time and again to be scientifically unsound. More than 90% of animal experiments fail to lead to treatments for humans. And yet every year, billions of tax dollars are wasted on misleading experimentation. Please contact your lawmakers and politely urge them to stop throwing taxpayer money away on cruel, useless animal experiments and instead direct it toward modern, non-animal methods of research, such as epidemiology,

advanced computer modeling, and cutting-edge human cell-based techniques.

In the U.S., you can contact your congressional representative and senators by visiting [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov), calling 202-224-3121, or writing to:

The Honorable [Full Name]
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable [Full Name]
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

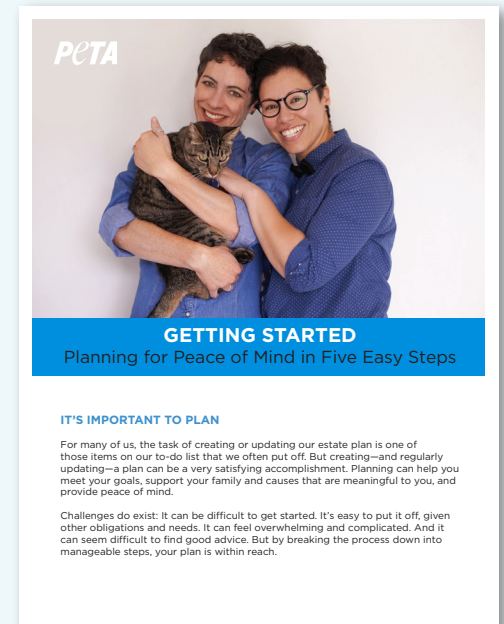
Do You Need a Planning Checkup?

The events of the last year have served as a reminder that life is uncertain and it’s important to be prepared. To protect yourself, your family, and your peace of mind, now is a good time to update your four core documents: your will, powers of attorney, advance directive, and beneficiary designations.

It’s always a good idea to update your plans after certain life events, including changes in health, finances, or family status—or even set yourself an annual reminder for a planning “checkup.” There are other good reasons to update your plans as well:

- It’s been five years or more since you last reviewed your will, trust, and/or beneficiary designations.
- Your marital status has changed.
- You’ve recently retired or changed jobs or started or sold a business.
- You’ve added a new member to your family, such as a new animal companion, a child, or a grandchild.
- Your health has changed and you need a power of attorney and/or an advance directive.
- You want to include a new or an additional gift for PETA in your plans.

Our free guide *Getting Started: Planning for Peace of Mind in Five Easy Steps* includes a quick quiz to determine whether you need to update your plans, questions to help you determine your personal and financial goals, and an overview of actions that everyone should take in planning for the future. Download this publication and other planning resources at [PETA.org/NewsResources](https://www.peta.org/NewsResources), or return the enclosed form to request a copy by mail.



Meet Lori Kettler, PETA Foundation Vice President and Deputy General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs



For more than two decades, Lori has been stopping animal exploiters from keeping public records hidden from PETA’s researchers, ensuring that government agencies fulfill their duty to protect animals, and making certain that animal abusers are punished in the criminal justice system.

Augustus Club: How did you become involved in animal rights?

Lori Kettler: I went vegetarian after seeing that there is no way to raise animals for milk and meat humanely and still make a profit. I saw this firsthand, because my former partner and his family were dairy and poultry farmers.

I was working in environmental law, but rather than focusing on populations of species, I wanted to focus on the well-being of individual animals. So I applied to work at PETA and came on board in 2000, which is also when I went vegan.



AC: What was your first job at PETA?

LK: I was counsel in the Cruelty Investigations Department. My position has evolved over the years—but the biggest difference is that when I was hired, I was the only in-house attorney, whereas now we have the largest and most effective legal team working for animal rights in the world!

AC: Describe a facet of your job that makes you especially happy.

LK: It’s the fact that everyone here is 110% committed to the cause.

AC: What are some of your most gratifying accomplishments in your time at PETA and the PETA Foundation?

LK: Going way back to my early days, I was thrilled to help rescue six polar bears who were being carted around the tropics in sweltering trailers by the Suarez Bros. Circus. After we filed a lawsuit, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service confiscated the bears and sent them to accredited zoos.

In recent years, the most rewarding thing has been pulling back the curtain on vivisection. Animal experiments take place behind closed doors, and the experimenters really don’t want people to see what they do. So it’s satisfying to win FOIA cases and force experimenters to turn over records and videos to PETA.

AC: Do you think PETA uses the FOIA more effectively than other organizations?

LK: Definitely. The proof is in how hard animal exploiters fight to keep us from getting their records. That’s because they know that PETA will make powerful use of them. So they work like crazy to hold onto records that they might be less reluctant to release to other groups. Consequently, we have to sue more often. I’m so grateful to our Augustus Club members for donating the resources that allow us to do that.

AC: Describe some of the ways in which institutions try to thwart PETA’s public records requests.

LK: The most common tactic is to charge outrageous fees—sometimes six figures, and in one instance nearly seven! In a case several years ago, we requested records from NIH on maternal deprivation experiments on baby monkeys conducted by a man named Stephen Suomi.

NIH tried to charge us \$100,000 to release the records! It lost that battle, and we forced it to release hundreds of hours of video. Then we launched an intensive campaign. As a result, after 30 years of these atrocities, the lab was closed, and Suomi will no longer be involved in any experiments on animals ever again.

Another tactic is for institutions to claim that what happens to animals in publicly funded experiments in publicly funded universities and government facilities is confidential business information.

Those are the issues that we have to litigate the most often.



Augustus Club—A Community of Champions for Animals

The Augustus Club newsletter shares stories of the accomplishments that PETA can achieve only through support from our members, like you. Each issue highlights some of the many ways your contributions influence animal-abusing industries and includes profiles of members and the animals they've helped save. This semi-annual newsletter is one of the benefits that we are honored to share with members of the Augustus Club. This club was created to recognize the exceptional individuals who have made animal protection a part of their lasting legacy by including a gift to PETA in their will or trust or by naming PETA as a beneficiary of an IRA or retirement account, life insurance policy, donor-advised fund, or other financial account.

If you would like to learn more about the ways in which your legacy can help make a difference for animals, please contact us or visit our website below. Our staff is always ready to answer your questions and to assist you in creating your legacy.

PETA Legacy Gifts, 501 Front St., Norfolk, VA 23510
Legacy@peta.org | 757-962-8213 | [PETA.org/Legacy](https://peta.org/Legacy)



A Free Tool to Create Your Legacy of Love

Want to give animals a brighter future? We've partnered with FreeWill to help you create a legal will for free and support PETA's work with a legacy gift so that you can advocate for animals for generations to come.

Protect those you love and create your legacy at [PETA.org/FreeWill](https://peta.org/FreeWill).

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