



August 9, 2022

San Antonio City Council
Municipal Plaza Building
114 W. Commerce St.
San Antonio, TX 78205

Dear San Antonio Council Members:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally, including over 25,000 in Bexar County—to again urge the city to retract its planned \$10 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to Texas Biomedical Research Institute (Texas Biomed). This is all the more urgent as the director of Texas Biomed's Southwest National Primate Research Center (SNPRC), Deepak Kaushal, has now been found in a government investigation to have **falsified and fabricated information** on his grant applications and in published work—and Texas Biomed is, so far, allowing him to stay in his leadership role. Over the past several months, many organizations and representatives addressed your committee and presented detailed requests for much-needed ARPA funds. Director Kaushal was likely the only one who was actively being investigated by the National Institutes of Health Office of Research Integrity (NIH ORI) for “intentionally, knowingly, and/or recklessly falsifying and fabricating” data and grant applications.

Last week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' watchdog issued a damning [case summary](#) that documented multiple components of Kaushal's grant applications and a publication as being knowingly falsified and fabricated. As reported in *Science*, even industry insiders are shocked that Texas Biomed is keeping Kaushal as the head of its primate center. Ronald Desrosiers, the former director of the now defunct New England National Primate Research Center remarked, “Any scientist who knowingly and intentionally falsifies data for the purpose of scientific publication and/or receipt of government funding should not be allowed to lead a research institution.” Kaushal seems to believe that the rules that govern science—and, particularly, the use of primates in experiments—don't apply to him. It is extraordinarily rare and embarrassing for a senior scientist like him to be investigated by the ORI. His actions mean that monkeys' lives were wasted, taxpayer dollars were squandered, and that for now, the SNPRC continues to have at its helm a scientist who has failed to commit to research integrity and to exhibit ethical behavior. The destabilizing impact of Kaushal's actions on Texas Biomed and SNPRC should not be underestimated.

Texas Biomed was facing scrutiny even before Kaushal took over as SNPRC director: The facility has a long history of documented animal welfare violations, committing 17 violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act since

PEOPLE FOR
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- PETA Germany
- PETA Switzerland
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

2015.¹ Many of these violations center around the institution's failure to contain the monkeys in the enclosures safely, adequately, and consistently. The history of animal escapes at Texas Biomed is profoundly alarming, as it is an animal biosecurity level four (ABSL 4) laboratory infecting primates with the most dangerous pathogens, including Ebola and tuberculosis.

Texas Biomed has received more than \$63 million in NIH taxpayer-supported funding since 2020. Unlike NIH funds, which the agency has at least some ability to investigate and then retract if/when blatant examples of malfeasance are revealed, we fear that Texas Biomed will have zero accountability for dispersed ARPA funds.

I urge you to retract all ARPA funds currently slated for Texas Biomed/SNPRC and direct those funds to other projects that will benefit the people of San Antonio rather than to this facility, which is currently headed by an individual who has demonstrated no respect for scientific integrity, animal welfare, transparency, or accountability. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Jones-Engel', written in a cursive style.

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¹Copies of these violations can be found on the USDA Animal Care Public Search Tool website:
<https://aphis-efile.force.com/PublicSearchTool/s>.