

PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

September 10, 2025

Alan Garber, M.A., Ph.D.
President
Harvard UniversityGeorge Q. Daley
Dean
Harvard Medical SchoolVia e-mail: president@harvard.edu; George_Daley@hms.harvard.edu

Dear President Garber and Dean Daley:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 10 million members and supporters globally, over 132,100 of whom live in Massachusetts. Harvard University and Harvard Medical School have maintained Public Health Service-approved Animal Welfare Assurances for decades. This assurance requires adherence to the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, including implementing the 3Rs principle: replacing animal use whenever possible, reducing the number of animals used, and refining procedures to minimize suffering.

Despite this, the university continues to use thousands of animals in its laboratories. Recent inventory reports document that Harvard used more than 121,000 mice and rats and 91,400 fishes in experiments. Federal reports from 2024 also documented the school's use of 213 dogs, 50 monkeys, 586 hamsters, and 5,793 other Animal Welfare Act (AWA)-covered species in its laboratories. According to reports filed by Harvard with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the number of AWA-covered animals used in experiments jumped by **25.7%** from 2014 to 2024. These figures directly contradict the university's assurance to the federal government that it would reduce animal use, exposing a troubling disregard for its stated commitment to adopting non-animal replacements and reducing reliance on animal experimentation.

What exactly is Harvard's plan to implement the 3Rs? You have used and killed animals for years with apparently no end in sight, despite your claim to abide by the best practices. We believe the public has the right to know if the university's pledge has been truthful.

Tax dollars wasted on cruel and ineffective research

In 2024, Harvard University received more than \$76 million in taxpayer funding while Harvard Medical School received over \$171 million from the National Institutes of Health —about half of which was spent on animal

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experiments. These included highly invasive procedures, such as those led by HMS experimenter Margaret Livingstone, who removed infant monkeys from their mothers at birth—a deeply traumatic and distressing experience—and performed visual deprivation experiments on them. In one case, she sewed baby monkeys’ eyes shut for up to a year. In others, motherless monkeys were reared by laboratory staff wearing welding masks so that the babies couldn’t see a single face—monkey or human—for a year. Livingstone then tested their face-processing abilities to assess how badly they’d been damaged. Nearly 400 scientists, doctors, academics, and lawyers—including renowned primatologist Dr. Jane Goodall—have condemned these experiments.

In another Harvard laboratory, experimenters [injured mice](#) by injecting a damaging chemical into their leg muscles, cutting the skin open to expose the muscle, and pressing a cold metal rod to freeze it. The mice were then forced through physical tests: hung upside down on a wire grid to see how long they could cling with injured legs, or forced to run on a treadmill at increasing speeds until exhaustion, with foot shocks used to keep them running.

You must be aware that numerous studies dating back more than two decades reveal the failure of animal experiments to lead to cures and treatments for human beings. Conferences, papers, and all manner of information sources show the availability of countless superior, non-animal research methods that produce far more reliable and species-relevant results for human health than experiments on animals. PETA scientists’ [Research Modernization Now](#) provides a detailed strategy for replacing experiments on animals with humane and human-relevant methods. Have you read it, and what is your plan to implement it or alternative solutions to this burgeoning use of animals on your campus?

Failure to comply with federal animal welfare regulations and guidelines

Harvard has repeatedly failed to comply with minimum federal animal welfare regulations and guidelines, as evidenced by multiple violations documented in federal reports. In recent years, over 50 frogs died after bleach-contaminated water leaked into their tank—mirroring another case where 1,256 frogs were exposed to contaminated water, leading to over 140 dying or requiring euthanasia. Additionally, experimenters have used expired drugs and performed unapproved procedures, resulting in animal suffering and death. These chronic failures to meet even the most basic animal welfare standards demonstrate a blatant disregard for both the law and the will of the American public.

Harvard’s failure to adhere to the 3Rs principles undermines public trust. We ask you to address this matter of public interest without delay. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



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