

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2016

The Honorable Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD
Director, National Institutes of Health
Building 1, Room 126
1 Center Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Dear Dr. Collins,

We commend you for your recent decisions to retire all National Institutes of Health (NIH)-owned chimpanzees to sanctuaries, and to end maternal deprivation experiments on monkeys at the NIH's Poolesville, Md. facility. Your bold actions to phase out controversial experiments on primates will be remembered as key moments in your agency's—and our country's—evolution in biomedical research.

While we greatly appreciate these actions to ensure the principled treatment of certain primates, we continue to believe that the time has come to critically evaluate the ethical policies and processes surrounding all nonhuman primate research. As such, Congress has taken several recent actions to direct the NIH to ensure ethical primate research protocols. We would like to draw your attention to the following House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies report language accompanying, by default, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016:

Review of Maternal Deprivation Studies. – ... the Committee requests NIH to conduct a review of its ethical policies and processes with respect to nonhuman primate research subjects, in consultation with outside experts, to ensure it has appropriate justification for animal research protocols and to provide an update on these efforts in the fiscal year 2017 budget request.

As authors and supporters of this report language, we want to stress our appreciation in advance for your personal involvement in ensuring that this review is productive and comprehensive. We would hope that this consultation with outside experts includes the leadership of the Institute of Medicine committee whose sage advice on chimpanzee research led to this year's retirement of all NIH chimps in research. It is also our expectation that your staff will welcome input from issue experts in the NIH's Department of Bioethics. We are confident that you will ensure the review is as independent as possible, so that the most difficult ethical questions with regards to the use of all non-human primates in a wide range of experiments can be honestly asked and answered.

Finally, we ask that you respond to us with the NIH's plan and approximate timeline to conduct this review. We look forward to working with you to ensure that critical taxpayer dollars are spent on research that is scientifically and ethically justified and appropriately humane to all non-human primate subjects involved.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Lucille Roybal-Allard
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Sam Farr
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Eliot L. Engel
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Dina Titus
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Brendan F. Boyle
MEMBER OF CONGRESS