

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 4, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman, Health Subcommittee
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman and Chairman Pallone:

On behalf of the more than 100 cosponsors of the Great Ape Protection Act (H.R. 1326), we are writing to respectfully urge you to hold a hearing on this critical legislation to protect chimpanzees from unnecessary suffering and potentially save nearly \$200 million taxpayer dollars. This legislation (1) phases out the use of chimpanzees in invasive research over a three-year period, (2) requires the retirement of the approximately 500 federally-owned chimpanzees to permanent sanctuary, and (3) codifies the National Institutes of Health (NIH) prohibition on the breeding of chimpanzees for research.

As the only remaining developed nation in the world still using chimpanzees in invasive research, it is time for the United States to join the rest of the world in ending invasive research on chimpanzees. From a scientific perspective, research on chimpanzees does not reliably predict safe and effective therapies for humans. Genetic and physiological differences between chimpanzees and humans confound research on diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis, providing misleading results. This helps explain why the total population of chimpanzees (including those simply being warehoused and not actively used in research) represents only 0.004 percent of the 25 million animals used in biomedical research and testing every year.

Human-based methods and models are now available that are proven to be significantly more effective in predicting whether or not a drug or treatment will be safe and effective in humans. American taxpayers spend an estimated \$25 million each year on chimpanzee maintenance and research, but at any given time, approximately 90% of chimpanzees are not used in active experiments. Instead, they are wasting away in these federally funded costing taxpayers millions of dollars every year.

It is incumbent upon Congress to ensure that precious federal research dollars are invested wisely and in methods that will most likely lead to effective treatments and cures for human illnesses. We believe that the opportunity to provide humane retirement for these animals, coupled with the potential taxpayer savings, justifies your consideration of the Great Ape Protection Act. We stand together in support of this legislation and seeing it through to passage. Before it is too late for these animals, and before even more taxpayer dollars are squandered with little or no benefit to humans, we urge you to consider H.R. 1326 at your earliest opportunity and hope that you will favorably report it to the full House.

Sincerely,



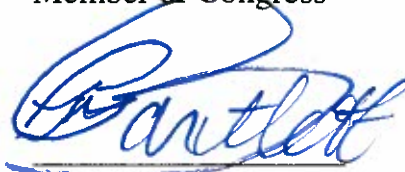
Edolphus "Ed" Towns
Member of Congress



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



David G. Reichert
Member of Congress



Roscoe G. Bartlett
Member of Congress