

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

May 16, 2008

Protect Our Great Apes: Cosponsor HR 5852



Dear Colleague:

In the wild, great apes (chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas and orangutans) establish lifelong friendships, have a strong sense of community, display emotional and social expression and can travel miles every day. They are highly intelligent animals with complex social and psychological needs that simply cannot be met in captivity. Yet, despite their ineffectiveness as a research model for humans, and regardless of the fact that it costs \$20 to \$25 million annually in taxpayer money to fund chimpanzee research, approximately 1,200 chimpanzees reside in cages as small as five square feet to be “used” for invasive research.

Many chimpanzees aren't being utilized for research and end up languishing in laboratories for decades, while some are subjected to painful experimental procedures such as “knock downs” – injecting or darting them with anesthetic - biopsies, isolation, and injection with viruses. More than 90% have lived in these circumstances for more than a decade. You can join us – along with original cosponsors Reps. Bruce Braley, Tom Allen , John Campbell, and Mary Bono Mack - in giving these beautiful primates, our closest living relatives, a humane retirement by cosponsoring H.R. 5852, The Great Ape Protection Act. This legislation would (1) phase out the use of chimpanzees in invasive research over a three-year period, (2) provide for the permanent retirement of government-owned and supported chimpanzees to the national sanctuary system Congress established under the Chimpanzee Health Improvement Maintenance and Protection (CHIMP) Act in 2000, and (3) codify the current moratorium on breeding of federally-owned chimpanzees for research.

Chimpanzees in research facilities can exhibit problems from depression to heightened aggression and even self-mutilation. Despite the pain it inflicts, invasive research on

chimpanzees has questionable scientific utility, as chimps have historically proven ineffective models for humans. For instance, chimpanzees largely failed as a model for HIV because the virus does not progress to AIDS in chimpanzees as it does in humans. Additionally, because of the high cost of their maintenance and ethical concerns with using them in invasive research, experiments on chimpanzees involve sample sizes too small to predict the safety or effectiveness of new drugs. With so many promising advances in the field of medical research technology, this is a funding source that could be applied to more constructive programs and resources.

H.R. 5852 will give great apes a humane retirement while spending taxpayer money more wisely: lifetime care in a research facility for a chimpanzee can cost between \$300,000 and \$500,000, compared with \$275,000 for care in a sanctuary. Public opinion polls indicate a strong and growing disapproval of chimpanzee use in research, and many research facilities have already voluntarily ceased breeding chimpanzees for research, recognizing it is an inefficient use of funding. Join the public and scientific community, as well as England, Sweden, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Austria, and Japan - who have all banned or limited invasive research on great apes - in calling for an end to this cruelty and become a cosponsor of the Great Ape Protection Act.

For more information or to cosponsor HR 5852 please contact Lars Hyde (Towns) at lars.hyde@mail.house.gov or Frank Walker (Reichert) at frank.walker@mail.house.gov.

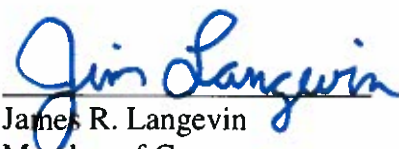
Sincerely,



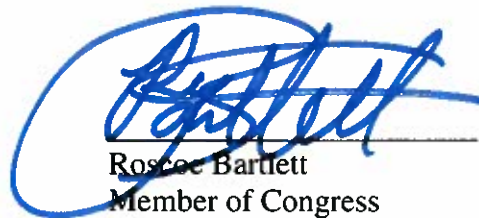
Edolphus "Ed" Towns
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert
Member of Congress



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



Roscoe Bartlett
Member of Congress