

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510
Congress Switchboard: 202-224-3121

Dear U.S. Congress Members,

A new rule in the National Defense Authorization Act requires the Department of Defense to report how animals are used in combat simulations to train medics. The Secretary of Defense has till 3/1/13 to submit a strategy for "transition to use of human-based methods in certain trainings."

This is the first time Congress has approved binding language on military animal tests. As a voter in your district, I am deeply grateful.

Still, we can do better for the men and women who serve this country. Michael P. Murphy, MD, medical general counsel for Iraq War Veterans Organization, has stated: "No animal can adequately duplicate the anatomy and physiology of injuries inflicted upon the human body in war."

As your constituent, I urge you to introduce and/or support complete replacement of military animal use with human-based models. Combat medics who amputate goat legs, bomb pigs, overdose monkeys on chemical or biological agents, and more artificially induced conditions, are not armed with the best skills to save lives in the field.

The DOD annually guns down, blows up, dismembers and poisons tens of thousands of pigs, goats, primates, dogs, cats and other animals — even though advanced computer simulations and sensor-studded mannequins can supply data more relevant to humans.

The internal organs of humans and other species differ in size, location, texture and elasticity. Knowledge acquired from animals may deceive trainees and foster false assurance in their own capabilities. Case in point: For a past drill to test QuikClot on acute hemorrhage, stabbed and shot pigs survived at a rate of nearly 100 percent. In the field, this remedy failed and soldiers died.

In previous sessions of Congress, the Battlefield Excellence Through Superior Training Practices Act (H.R.1417 / S.3418) sought to develop, test and validate human-focused medical training. The BEST Practices Act set a 10/1/16 deadline for transition to animal-free technology alone. Please help any legislation with similar goals gain traction in the 113th Congress.

The Army's Rascon School of Combat Medicine at Fort Campbell has shown that training "on [simulators] is more realistic to providing care for a person than training on animals." The Air Force Center for Sustainment of Trauma and Readiness Skills and the Navy Trauma Training Center also use human-related methods in place of live animals.

It's time to modernize all military medical training, as most of our NATO allies have done. Please support a comprehensive ban on military animal labs and prioritize optimal training for soldiers.

Thank you,