

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Seventy-Eighth Session  
March 24, 2015**

The Senate Committee on Natural Resources was called to order by Chair Don Gustavson at 1:33 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2015, in Room 2144 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Don Gustavson, Chair  
Senator Pete Goicoechea, Vice Chair  
Senator James A. Settelmeyer  
Senator David R. Parks  
Senator Mark A. Manendo

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Alysa Keller, Policy Analyst  
Matthew Nichols, Counsel  
Gayle Farley, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Kevin Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, Nevada Humane Society  
Beverlee McGrath, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals;  
Best Friends Animal Society; Nevada Humane Society; Northern Nevada  
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; Northern Nevada  
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; Nevada Political Action  
for Animals; Lake Tahoe Humane Society; Lake Tahoe Society for the  
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; Pet Network of Lake Tahoe; Wylie  
Animal Rescue; Fallon Animal Welfare; Hidden Valley Horse Rescue;  
Nevada Humane Society of Carson City; Compassion Charity for Animals  
Margaret Flint, Beagle Freedom Project; Canine Rehabilitation Center and  
Sanctuary; Nevadans for Responsible Wildlife Management  
Kristen Ivey, Executive Director, Canine Rehabilitation Center and Sanctuary

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Mary Cannon  
Shannon Keith, President, Beagle Freedom Project  
Monique Hanson, Beagle Freedom Project  
Fred Voltz  
Michael Ginsburg  
Marina Ramos  
Jan Valentino  
Heidi Petermeier  
Elaine Carrick  
Eddie Floyd, Wild Horse Preservation League; Let 'em Run Foundation;  
Hidden Valley Wild Horse Protection Fund; Wynema Ranch Wild Horse  
Sanctuary  
Trish Swain, Director, Nevada Chapter League of Humane Voters  
Sara Lemma  
Eliza Lemma  
Cheryl Dortch  
Karen Jacobs  
Krista Gifford  
Robin Reddle  
Steve Underhill  
Anni Labansat  
Scott Scherer, Charles River Laboratories  
Robert Stachlewitz, Senior Site Director, Charles River Laboratories  
David Reim, D.V.M., Charles River Laboratories  
Walt Mandeville, D.V.M., University of Nevada, Reno  
Dennis Wilson, D.V.M., Nevada Veterinary Association  
Tray Abney, The Chamber

**Chair Gustavson:**

I will open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 261.

**SENATE BILL 261**: Makes various changes relating to certain facilities that are engaged in scientific, medical or educational research. (BDR 50-56)

**Senator Mark A. Manendo (Senatorial District No. 21):**

Ninety-five percent of laboratory research dogs are beagles. Their docile nature and people-pleasing personalities make them good research subjects and popular family pets. Senate Bill 261 gives innocent dogs a second chance instead of being indiscriminately killed when a research institution no longer has use for

them. There are nearly 65,000 dogs used in research facilities across the United States. This includes 3,000 dogs in 13 separate laboratories in Minnesota. Minnesota passed a bill similar to S.B. 261, and it is working for them. If it works for them, it can work for Nevada.

This bill would limit the time an animal can be tested to 2 years and would mandate public adoption of these animals when research is completed. We have a proposed amendment ([Exhibit C](#)) releasing the research facility of all liability, with full confidentiality for any animal that is placed for public adoption. This bill does not regulate or interfere with medical research or force laboratories to release sick, injured or suffering animals; nor require the research facility to provide transportation, veterinary care or the screening of applicants who wish to adopt one of these research animals. We have many organizations that are willing to provide all care that is needed. There are no guidelines or policies covering this aspect of animal welfare, and this bill is necessary. We realize there has been considerable federal and state legislation passed with voluminous regulations concerning the treatment of research animals while they are in the facilities; however, there is nothing to provide protection for the animal once testing has ceased. Many research animals are euthanized after the testing is completed although they may be healthy. If a dog or cat is adopted, it is usually to an employee or laboratory worker of the facility. There exists no mechanism for citizens to adopt one of these animals. I have provided research from one of my constituents ([Exhibit D](#)).

**Kevin Ryan (Chief Executive Officer, Nevada Humane Society):**

The Nevada Humane Society would be proud to serve as a collaborative partner with the agencies conducting the animal research. The Nevada Humane Society is a no-kill community. We work with several private organizations and rescue groups to ensure that if rehabilitation of an animal is necessary it can be done. We have adopted out over 70,000 animals since 2007, and the return rate is under 8 percent. We take animals from all circumstances and provide lifetime medical care for animals with existing medical conditions at our expense in our clinic. We support S.B. 261.

**Beverlee McGrath (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; Best Friends Animal Society; Nevada Humane Society; Northern Nevada Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; Nevada Political Action for Animals; Lake Tahoe Humane Society; Lake Tahoe Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; Pet Network of Lake Tahoe; Wylie Animal Rescue; Fallon Animal Welfare; Hidden Valley Horse Rescue; Nevada Humane Society of Carson City; Compassion Charity for Animals):**

All of the organizations I represent support this bill. I would like to personally thank the people of Charles River Laboratories (CRL) for engaging in a conversation with us about this bill. It was beneficial and the proposed amendment before you, [Exhibit C](#), contains language that reflects our willingness to cooperate with them. Pain and distress are often part of the testing protocol. According to CRL, each test is for 26 weeks; however, many of these dogs are tested continuously for several years and sometimes for their entire lives. Two years is enough time to conduct testing on an animal. The CRL has never released a dog for adoption to anyone. They are all euthanized.

**Senator Manendo:**

I would like to introduce two beagles by the names of Dean and Luke that are in the audience. These two dogs are animal research dogs and they are very social. This is evidence that demonstrates research animals are adoptable. In fact, Senator Patricia Farley said she might want to adopt one of these dogs. If this bill passes, she could be the first person to adopt a research dog from CRL.

**Senator Goicoechea:**

We seem to be focused on the CRL. How many animal research facilities do we have in the State that use beagles for testing?

**Senator Manendo:**

There is a CRL in the north and a facility in the south. I am still in the process of obtaining more information. We are not sure where the dogs come from.

**Senator Goicoechea:**

That is interesting because we do not have a veterinary school in this State.

**Senator Settlemeyer:**

I am very interested in getting that data back from Senator Manendo. I am looking online and see there are four animal research facilities listed by the

Humane Society: the University of Nevada, Reno; University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Tactical Medical Research and Training, LLC in Las Vegas and the Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas. It does not mention the CRL in the south referred to by Senator Manendo.

**Senator Manendo:**

That company is here today and will tell you that they are performing tests with animals. I do not know if the universities do that any longer.

**Chair Gustavson:**

Will the employees of the research facilities determine if the animals are healthy enough for adoption?

**Senator Manendo:**

Yes. If an animal is absolutely too sick or had to go through a procedure where they had to euthanize the dog, we would understand that. But, we have been told there are dogs that will be tested repeatedly for a 26- to 30-week period. At some point, enough is enough.

**Margaret Flint (Beagle Freedom Project; Canine Rehabilitation Center and Sanctuary; Nevadans for Responsible Wildlife Management):**

These beagles spend their entire lives in a sterile laboratory environment and never see the outdoors. The only contact they have with humans is with laboratory technicians wearing gloves, sterile gowns and partial face masks. I have submitted testimony with pictures ([Exhibit E](#)) about a dog I worked with from the Canine Rehabilitation Center and Sanctuary (CRCS) named Calvin. Calvin was a research dog and has adjusted very well since his adoption.

**Kristin Ivey (Executive Director, Canine Rehabilitation Center and Sanctuary):**

The CRCS is a rescue, recovery and rehabilitation center for dogs. We have been successfully caring for dogs like Calvin and placing them in homes for many years. Ninety percent of our dogs were labeled unadoptable by another shelter or rescue prior to coming to us. More than 85 percent of these dogs have never successfully lived in a home before and over 50 percent that come to us have been isolated and confined for longer than 2 years. Calvin is a good example. He was tested in a facility in California for 2 years by two different laboratories. He was labeled unadoptable by multiple agencies and days from being euthanized. We asked to be given 3 months to work with him. Within that

time, he had improved significantly, and was adopted 6 months later and now has a normal life. This does work.

**Mary Cannon:**

I am the owner of Calvin. I support this bill.

**Shannon Keith (President, Beagle Freedom Project):**

One of the Beagle Freedom Project's primary missions is to negotiate the release of dogs from research facilities. We have successfully placed 400 laboratory dogs from 35 states and 4 foreign countries in loving homes. We have a 100 percent success rate. The supporters of the Beagle Freedom Project often get calls from technicians who are desperate to find homes for these animals and do not know where to go. They do not know if they can possibly release these animals until they find us. It is difficult for us because there is no policy in place. This bill would make it easier. Last year, Minnesota became the first state to pass this kind of bill, and it is working very well for them.

**Monique Hanson (Beagle Freedom Project):**

I am a member of the Beagle Freedom Project and am in support of this bill.

**Chair Gustavson:**

Are these animals ever taken back to the research lab?

**Ms. Hanson**

No. Once they are released, we provide for their care and medical needs.

**Fred Voltz:**

The opponents to this legislation will come forth and likely suggest that if they could not use experimental animals longer than 2 years they would need to use more animals for research. However, the response to those contentions is that these animals would have a greater likelihood of survival if they were subjected to fewer consecutive testing regimens. Animals who have endured serial experiments are likely to yield less reliable results because their immune systems have been repeatedly compromised. Due to technology advances, cutting edge medical laboratories are moving toward new research models and protocols that rely less on the use of animals. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods contains 15 major federal research and regulatory agencies working toward this end. Senate Bill 261 dovetails seamlessly with the

worldwide movement toward improved testing procedures and I strongly support it.

**Michael Ginsburg:**

I have a former research beagle named Darwin and I am here to support S.B. 261. Darwin was extremely nervous and underweight when we first adopted him; however, today he is a healthy, happy member of our family. We have never regretted the decision to adopt Darwin and would like to echo the sentiments of those who have spoken.

**Marina Ramos:**

I am also a supporter of the Beagle Freedom Project and an auntie to Toby, Spanky, Timmy, Baxter and countless other animals whose rescues I witnessed. I have seen the fear in these animals caused by something as simple as rain. I am in support of S.B. 261.

**Jan Valentino:**

I am a volunteer and foster mother for the Beagle Freedom Project. I fostered Dean, one of the nine beagles that were released in Las Vegas, and he was a joy. It only took him 5 weeks to adjust from living in a laboratory environment to living in a home. I strongly support this bill.

**Senator Goicoechea:**

Where do these dogs come from?

**Ms. Valentino:**

We were not given that information, but I believe they are from out of state.

**Senator Goicoechea:**

Apparently they are coming from out of state as I know of no other facility that is testing beagles other than CRL, and it has not released any animals.

**Heidi Petermeier:**

I am in favor of S.B. 261. Last year I fostered and adopted Danny, a retired research beagle. Today he is a happy, loving furry family member.

**Elaine Carrick:**

I echo the sentiments of the people who have testified before me. I support this bill.

**Eddie Floyd (Wild Horse Preservation League; Let 'em Run Foundation; Hidden Valley Wild Horse Protection Fund; Wynema Ranch Wild Horse Sanctuary):**

On behalf of the Wild Horse Preservation League; Let 'em Run Foundation; Hidden Valley Wild Horse Protection Fund and Wynema Ranch Wild Horse Sanctuary, we support this bill.

**Trish Swain (Director, Nevada Chapter League of Humane Voters):**

We totally support this bill. I would to like honor Melody, my beloved beagle who has passed. Beagles are wonderful dogs and should have the chance like all other animals to be in loving homes.

**Sara Lemma:**

I have a former research beagle and this is the best dog I have ever had. I am in support of this bill.

**Eliza Lemma:**

I am 9 years old and support this bill. I think beagles should all have a chance to recover from the trauma they have had to endure as research animals.

**Cheryl Dortch:**

I have three dogs that I have adopted from the Beagle Freedom Project. I am in support of S.B. 261.

**Karen Jacobs:**

I am a retired police officer from the State. Euthanasia is never the answer to animals that are adoptable after research. Please pass this bill.

**Krista Gifford:**

I support S.B. 261.

**Robin Reddle:**

I am a beagle owner and support this bill.

**Steve Underhill:**

I have fostered beagles for the Beagle Freedom Project. These animals are the best dogs for pets, and I am in support of S.B. 261.



**Anni Labansat:**

We have the opportunity to change the outcome of these dogs' lives today. I am strongly in support of S.B. 261.

**Scott Scherer (Charles River Laboratories):**

I would ask if Mr. Stachlewitz could have a few more than 2 minutes to testify, as there are fewer in opposition than in support of this bill. We also have David Reim, who is not going to testify, but will be here to answer any questions you may have.

**Chair Gustavson:**

I will allow that as I did with those who supported the bill.

**Robert Stachlewitz (Senior Site Director, Charles River Laboratories):**

I have provided a copy of my written testimony ([Exhibit F](#)). I would like to describe briefly exactly what CRL does.

Charles River Laboratories is a global contract research organization that works with both academic institutions and large and small pharmaceutical companies. We provide drug discovery, research, safety assessment and clinical and manufacturing support for pharmaceuticals.

The research we provide is a prerequisite for companies to demonstrate the safety of an experimental medicine to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other medical regulatory agencies throughout the world prior to initiating human clinical trials.

We are required to ensure that scientific justification for use of animals in research be provided and that alternatives to animal use in experimentation be used whenever possible. Beagles are purposely bred for research and typically group housed at our facilities. They are observed by a veterinarian or veterinarian technician daily. No animals are euthanized in the facility without a scientific purpose.

Many of these animals have a surgical device implanted in them to allow us to monitor scientific data that is invaluable to our research. Because of the type of surgery used to implant these devices, the recovery time and the expense of the device, these animals are used for a number of years in studies with different

experimental medicines. It is our goal to get the best data possible so we do not have to repeat studies or increase our animal use.

The 2-year time frame will only increase the expense of research and the number of animals used. Currently, these animals would not be candidates for adoption programs as the procedure of recovering the implanted device is terminal. The decision to retire a research animal should be science-based.

Furthermore, the bill makes no allowance for a company-sponsored, internal adoption program. In the case of the relatively few animals that are adoptable, homes are most often found for them among employees of the research facilities.

**Senator Goicoechea:**

Were you involved in drafting the proposed amendment?

**Mr. Stachlewitz:**

No. We were not involved in drafting that amendment and only received it right before this Committee hearing.

**Senator Goicoechea:**

I am in the business of raising livestock, and I know research is critical. From the testimony I have heard today, it is clear that these animals are coming from other states. Do you test cats?

**Mr. Stachlewitz:**

No, we do not test cats. Since we are the only company in the State that would be potentially subject to this legislation, it is our goal to have a company-sponsored adoption program that could be achieved without legislation. Charles River Laboratories has adopted animals out of our facility in other states, but not in Nevada. We do not see a need for this bill.

**Chair Gustavson:**

What happens to the animals that have not been adopted by employees?

**Mr. Stachlewitz:**

We do not euthanize an animal inside the facility that does not have a scientific purpose for that euthanasia. All of our euthanasias are carried out humanely.

**Senator Manendo:**

The proposed amendment, [Exhibit C](#), addresses the issue of an animal that has had a surgically implanted medical device and employee adoptions. What we are proposing is a partnership with the research facilities and animal advocate organizations.

When was the last time your facility in Reno was inspected?

**Mr. Stachlewitz:**

Our facility was inspected by the voluntary accreditation organization, Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International, in January 2015. We host over 30 regulatory client quality visits per year and host five to ten clients every week who have free access to visit the animals employed in their particular study.

**Senator Manendo:**

How many dogs do you have currently at CRL in Reno?

**David Reim, D.V.M. (Charles River Laboratories Laboratories):**

We currently have 50 dogs at the Reno site.

**Senator Manendo:**

How long have they been there?

**Dr. Reim:**

The range is a few weeks to 2 or 3 years.

**Senator Manendo:**

Do the dogs that have been there for 3 years have a device implanted inside them?

**Dr. Reim:**

No, they have no device implanted in them. They are in our training colony. We maintain dogs after they have been employed in studies. If they are not terminal, we maintain those dogs so we can train our staff in normal dog behavior. They are taught how to handle the dogs, do veterinary observations, dose the animals with the medications and collect blood and urine samples.

**Senator Manendo:**

The proposed amendment, [Exhibit C](#), protects the facility in the event a device has been implanted in a dog and there is need to continue a study. The dogs that you are referring to could be adopted after 2 years and the process could be started over with a new dog. What do you do with the dogs that have been there for 3 years?

**Dr. Reim:**

We would use them as long as they are healthy and as long as their work does not require that we collect terminal samples from those dogs.

**Senator Manendo:**

Would they be released at that point?

**Dr. Reim:**

No, however, the company is exploring this idea.

**Senator Goicoechea:**

How many of the 50 dogs at the facility could be transitioned after a 2- to 3-year period?

**Mr. Scherer:**

Long-term studies may require an animal to be on-site for longer than the 2-year period. There are extended studies for certain drugs to ensure there are no negative ramifications or increased health risks after long-term use. These decisions are entirely science-based.

**Senator Goicoechea:**

The amendment looks as if it addresses that issue.

**Mr. Scherer:**

We have not had a chance to look at the proposed amendment because we did not see it until right before this hearing. We are certainly willing to look at it and have a discussion with regard to whether the language already addresses this concern.

**Chair Gustavson:**

I would like to have two or three of the CRL staff and Senator Manendo get together after this meeting.

**Walt Mandeville, D.V.M. (University of Nevada, Reno):**

I work with the U.S. National Institutes of Health Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), which is a specialized committee governed under the Animal Welfare Act. We develop protocols for research that are completely based around animal welfare. I have provided you with a copy of our letter of concern ([Exhibit G](#)).

As the attending veterinarian for CRL, I have the authority granted to me by the U.S. government to halt research if I think there are any questions with regard to animal welfare. One of the areas we review closely is justification for the time length on particular studies. Studies may be less than 2 years; however, there may be longer ones, depending on the research. These studies are revisited twice a year and the IACUC does intensive walk-through inspections twice a year. To set a 2-year time frame to release animals can seriously handicap a particular research program. Studies involving geriatrics and long-term diseases similar to arthritis require longer-term research. There are cases where a dog is scent trained to assist in research. This dog may be listed on a particular protocol where a longer time is needed to fulfill the research. A lot of time and effort is committed to train a dog like that to just remove it in 2 years. The Nevada System of Higher Education is opposed to S.B. 261.

**Chair Gustavson:**

The proposed amendment, [Exhibit C](#), addresses the 2-year time limit of the bill.

**Dr. Mandeville:**

We can also see liability becoming an issue if the dog is returned to the institution, in addition to the time the employees of the facility would have to take in determining the disposition of these animals.

**Dennis Wilson, D.V.M. (Nevada Veterinary Medical Association):**

The Nevada Veterinary Medical Association supports the concept of adoption for suitable healthy dogs and cats from research facilities upon completion of research. Biomedical research also benefits the welfare of dogs and cats. It is due to research on dogs that we were able to develop a parvovirus vaccine and protect dogs from this disease. I have not seen the proposed amendment; however, I do feel the 2-year limit on research is inappropriate. It is our opinion that legislation is unnecessary for the adoption of suitable research animals.

**Tray Abney (The Chamber):**

I will disclose that my wife works for CRL in Reno. I would like to address the 450 jobs that this legislation could affect. The Michigan law that has been discussed in this hearing expires this summer. There was no time limit in that law. If this bill were to pass, we would be the only State with this legislation. Animal research will continue to occur, which means these facilities will have to bring in more dogs to comply with this bill or those studies will go elsewhere. We urge you to look past emotions and look toward science and facts. This is a large employer in northern Nevada that is governed by several federal agencies. We are concerned about the effect this will have on this facility and employment in our area.

**Senator Manendo:**

I would like to direct my question to Dr. Wilson. Where is your facility?

**Dr. Wilson:**

I manage the Animal Emergency Center in Reno.

**Senator Manendo:**

Are you involved in animal research?

**Dr. Wilson:**

No.

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**Chair Gustavson:**

There being no further testimony or public comment, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources is adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Gayle Farley,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Don Gustavson, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit		Witness or Agency	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	7		Attendance Roster
S.B. 261	C	4	Senator Manendo	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 261	D	7	Senator Manendo	Written Presentation
S.B. 261	E	2	Margaret Flint	Written Presentation
S.B. 261	F	4	Robert Stachlewitz	Written Testimony
S.B. 261	G	1	Walt Mandeville	Statement of Opposition