

Ignorance can no longer be used as an excuse.

Education is Required

It is unfair to expect members of Congress to act in an enlightened manner if the members are uninformed. It is the duty of members to become informed prior to making decisions regarding the allocation of public funds. This requirement to inform themselves has often been abrogated by members and the information on which decisions are based is increasingly supplied by the special interests within government asking for funding. This newsletter will supply members with information directly from government sources and scholarly journals. At the end of the day, no member of Congress will any longer be able to say they simply did not know. Now you do.

The Congressional Educator is written for members of Congress and their staff.

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Persons are encouraged to send a copy of this document to their representatives. For your representatives' addresses go to:
www.vote-smart.org.

Brain Research

Congress, through the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is funding researchers David Amaral, at the University of California Davis and Ned Kalin, at the University of Wisconsin Madison, to experiment on the emotion centers of monkeys' brains. The techniques used by these scientists are similar. The amygdala is the almond-shaped region of the brain involved in basic emotions such as fear, anger and aggression. There is an amygdala in each hemisphere of the brain. Amaral and Kalin destroy or otherwise damage these structures in monkeys' brains and then observe the changes in the monkeys' behavior.

Comparative neurophysiology teaches that the relative size of the regions or structures of an animal's brain explains much concerning their abilities and behavior. Cats possess a better sense of balance than humans because their cerebellum is relatively larger. Dogs have better senses of smell because their olfactory lobes are much larger. That humans are so much better problem solvers is related to our own large cerebral cortex.

The monkeys used by Kalin and Amaral are macaques. These monkeys have amygdalas both relatively and

absolutely larger than human amygdalas. It is likely that the emotions experienced by these animals are more intense and central to their lives when compared with human emotions. As relatively reduced as these attributes must be in humans, they are recognized as being a profound part of our innermost being.

This raises important and as yet unexamined ethical questions regarding experiments on these animals.

Amaral has been experimenting on the living brains of monkeys for three decades. Through the NIH, Congress has awarded him \$3.5 million since 1995. [NIH grants: R01NS016980; R01MH041479; R01MH057502.]

Kalin has been awarded nearly \$2.5 million since 1993. [NIH grants: R01MH040855; R01MH046729.]

The Public is Alarmed

In New Zealand and the United Kingdom, experiments involving the Great Apes: chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, and orangutans, have been outlawed. The Netherlands has just announced that it too will ban experiments on chimpanzees; this will effectively outlaw experiments on Great Apes

throughout the European Union.

In the United States, experimentation on these animals continues to be condoned and funded by Congress. But over two hundred organizations in the U.S. have signed a call for a Presidential moratorium on experiments on all primate species.

The statement reads:

During the last 35 years, exploitative primate research has consumed billions in American tax dollars while it has contributed very little to human welfare. It has diverted funding from non-animal research technology that could have been more productive and from social programs - such as drug rehabilitation,

prenatal care, and nutrition education - that could have benefited, directly and indirectly, the majority of the population.

While over three decades of primate-based research has not produced the promised cures for human diseases, it has taught us about the sensitivity of the non-human primate subjects. We now know that non-human primates have emotional responses remarkably similar to human emotional responses. Apes who have learned American Sign Language have used this human language to clearly communicate frustration, grief, and other emotions. There are convincing indications that non-human primates in experiments suffer as intensely, both physically and emotionally, as humans would suffer in the same experiments.

Recognizing this, we are ethically compelled to stop using them in experiments.

We are calling for the creation of a Presidential advisory committee composed of primate experts and informed lay people - a panel agreed upon by both pro-animal and pro-research advocates - to critically examine the evidence and make a recommendation to the President and the nation regarding the ethical implications of continuing exploitative primate research. Until the committee's report is finalized, federal funding for primate research should cease.

[The list of signatories is available upon request.]

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