

## Federal, State Legislators Propose Felony Laws for Animal Facility Break-in, Theft

The Animal Liberation Front has begun to wear out its welcome in the halls of both the Congress and state legislatures.

The covert animal activist organization, which claims responsibility for doing millions of dollars in damage from vandalism and thefts at several dozen animal facilities since 1979, is now the target of two US senators and a handful of state legislators.

Senators Howell Heflin (D-AL) and Jesse Helms (R-NC) have introduced bills that would provide federal protection to animal research facilities and to animal facilities engaging in food production or agriculture research, respectively.

Both bills would make it a federal offense to release, steal, or to intentionally cause the loss of a laboratory or farm animal; to damage, vandalize, or steal any property from a farm or animal research facility; or to obtain access to a farm or animal research facility under false pretense.

Heflin's bill also contains provisions making it illegal to obtain, exercise control, possess, or use records, data, material, equipment, or animals taken by theft or deception from a research facility. Additionally, the bill provides that any person convicted of such violations is liable for making restitution not only for the replacement of stolen or damaged materials, data, equipment, or animals, but also to pay the cost for repeating any experiment that has been interrupted or invalidated.

The maximum penalties for conviction is a fine of \$5,000 and one year in jail, or both, for each violation. The maximum penalties for the Helms' bill is a fine of \$10,000 and three years imprisonment for stealing or releasing farm animals or damaging a farm animal facility; a fine of \$1,000 and one year imprisonment for trespassing on a farm animal facility with the intent to commit a prohibited act.

Both bills have been referred to the Senate's Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

In recent months, five states have enacted laws protecting research facilities from vandalism and theft and two states have such legislation under consideration.

Massachusetts was the first state to enact legislation to protect animal research facilities from unlawful entry, vandalism, theft, and release of animals. The law provides maximum penalties of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$25,000 for conviction of damage, trespass, or removal of property from any place where animals are housed or used in research.

Minnesota enacted a law stating that a person who intentionally and without permission releases an animal lawfully confined for science, research, commerce, or education will be guilty of a misdemeanor or liable for damages and costs of restoring the animal. For a second offense, the individual will be guilty of a gross misdemeanor, and a third and subsequent offense are felonies.

In Utah, a person will be guilty of a second degree offense if that individual enters or remains unlawfully in a research facility with the intent to obtain unauthorized control over, alter, eradicate, damage, deface, or destroy any specimen or property in the facility; release from confinement or remove any animal; or commit an assault on a person.

In Indiana, any person who recklessly, knowingly, or intentionally damages property that causes substantial interruption or impairment of work conducted in a scientific research facility will be guilty of a class D felony.

Louisiana enacted legislation stating that any person who enters or remains unlawfully in an animal research facility to commit or with intention to commit illegal acts as specified, including releasing or stealing any animal or damaging, vandalizing, or stealing any property, will be fined not more

### How to Meet the Press

How do you respond to reporters' questions concerning your research and the care and treatment of your laboratory animals? Your answers will reflect directly on you and your institute and, perhaps, your future.

To help you meet the media, The American Physiological Society is sponsoring a one-day training program to be conducted by Oglivy & Mather, a New York City public relations firm. The program features individual hands-on experiences in self-defense techniques for dealing with a hostile interviewer, how to be heard and understood on a panel show, body language for the television camera, and methods to accentuate the positive aspects of your work and the need to use laboratory animals.

The training program will be conducted at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, D.C., on Sunday, April 1, 1989, beginning at 9:30 AM and ending at 4:30 PM. Registration fee for APS members is \$25; for others attending the FASEB meeting the fee is \$50.