

U.S. Adopts Hard Line As Three PETA Demonstrators Face Federal Felony Charges

The federal government has taken a hard-line approach against animal activists who destroy property and assault employees during protest demonstrations.

A federal grand jury in Baltimore, MD, indicted three activists on felony counts for their actions at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) during a protest demonstration sponsored by PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals).

Charged with assaulting an NIH police officer were Alex Pacheco, 30, and Carol Burnett, 37, both of Kensington, MD, and charged with destroying government property was Edward M. Ashton, 40, of Beacon, NY, who broke open the front door of the NIH Administration Building, according to the indictments.

Several hundred people converged on NIH on April 24 to protest the use of laboratory animals in research and gained entry to the administration building by breaking the door. Police arrested 21 people for trespass.

Normally, demonstrators are charged with trespass or some other misdemeanor. "But these people (animal activists) have become more and more violent and it is time to draw the line," Maryland US Attorney Breckinridge L. Willcox said.

PETA's national director, Ingrid Newkirk, said the government's hard line will backfire because it will generate more activism by animal activists.

Both Pacheco and Burnett, if convicted of assault, face up to three years in prison and fines of \$25,000. Ashton could get up to 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 if convicted of property destruction.

Industrial Organizations Ready To Challenge Animal Activists

Two sectors within the industrial community are preparing to take on animal activists seeking to outlaw the use of animals for testing consumer products.

Both the Procter & Gamble Company and the Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association are developing within their industries programs targeted at legislators, the media, and the public in states where activists are pushing to halt animal testing.

Procter & Gamble is seeking to raise \$17.5 million over a three-year period to promote a pro-testing viewpoint. The money would be spent through the Industry Coalition on Animal Testing. Among the firms invited to join the coalition are Johnson & Johnson, 3M, Colgate-Palmolive, Bristol-Myers, Merck & Co., Syntex, Eastman Kodak, IBM, Monsanto, Lever Brothers, and Gillette. Each company would contribute \$850,000 to support the coalition effort.

The cosmetic industry is seeking to raise \$1 million from its members to finance its fight against those who want to ban animal testing.

E. Edward Kavanaugh, the association's president, said in a letter to the membership, "We are not dealing with rational opponents. We are dealing with zealots who cannot comprehend that a child's life is more important than a dog's." He added that the activists have distorted the industry's animal-testing methods, spread misinformation, and that the threat of adverse legislation is very real.

Both Procter & Gamble and the association said that the complete elimination of animal testing would jeopardize the safety of consumers.

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