

THE PHYSIOLOGIST



A Publication of the American Physiological Society

Volume 32, Number 6

December 1989

EDITORIAL

You Can Make the Difference

The time has come for physiologists and other members of the biomedical community to take a stand. We can no longer allow the public's anti-science attitude to affect legislation that has an impact on efforts to reduce human suffering from disease. A time for action will come in April 1990 at the APS/FASEB meeting in Washington, DC.

Visiting your elected representative while attending the meeting can make a difference. It can make a difference because you are a constituent, a voting member of your representative's district. You are the only one who can give him/her a credible explanation of what is happening at your institution.

Last year, Vernon Bishop discovered that he could make a difference. While visiting his congressman, Rep. Albert Bustamante (D-TX), Bishop asked Bustamante to explain why he was a co-sponsor of a resolution by Rep. Robert C. Smith (R-NH) in the 100th Congress requiring the transfer of the Silver Spring monkeys from the federally sponsored Delta Regional Primate Center in Louisiana to a privately owned facility, Primarily Primates, in San Antonio. After Bishop explained the true status of the monkeys, Bustamante expressed his willingness to reconsider his sponsorship. Bustamante no longer is a co-sponsor of Smith's bill, HR 2596, in the 101st Congress.

(continued on p. 262)

Laboratory Animal Issues Broadened with New Focus on Use by High Schools

For more than a century the question of the use of laboratory animals was an issue that focused primarily on research laboratories. With the advent of the animal rights movement a decade ago the question of animal use was broadened into areas concerned with the utilization of animals for food, work, clothing, and entertainment.

The newest target now for the animal activists is the use of animals in high school biology classrooms for the purposes of teaching and dissection.

A national campaign to encourage students to oppose dissection on ethical issues has been initiated by the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF), a national network of 300 lawyers who argue that biology is a life science, not a death science, and that dissection teaches that animal life is expendable and unimportant.

The "Students Against Dissection" campaign was started by ALDF in October with an announcement in the nation's press of a telephone hot line for providing support and information to both students and teachers and with the showing of a daytime network television program dramatizing how a high school student's refusal to dissect a frog led to a California law giving students the right to refuse to dissect an animal.

ALDF's sponsored hot line (1-800-922-FROG) provides students with information about their legal rights, alternatives, how to consult with school officials, and referrals to local attorneys who will represent their interests. Students also receive the handbook, "Objecting To Dissection."

The goals of the hot line are to help students defend their right to an education in accordance with their ethical beliefs and to change the way biology is taught in the classroom. ALDF also is working to assemble a battery of test cases to prove that students have a First Amendment right not to dissect an animal if dissection conflicts with their ethical beliefs.

CBS network's "Schoolbreak Special" dramatized Jenifer Graham's legal fight to avoid the dissection of a frog in her high school biology class. Graham filed suit against the school district last year in the Los Angeles Federal District Court. The suit was dismissed after school officials agreed with the judge's plan to allow Graham to view photographs to identify body parts of a dissected frog that had died from natural causes.

(continued on p. 263)

EX OFFICIO

Norman R. Alpert, John S. Cook, Carl V. Gisolfi, R. Blake Reeves, and W. S. Spielman

ber, please notify the central office as soon as possible.

Headquarters phone: (301) 530-7164. TELE-FAX: (301) 571-1844.

SOCIETY