

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2019

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Wilkie,

We were troubled to read your recent statements in support of the Veterans Affairs (VA)'s controversial dog testing program given its costs, animal welfare concerns, and opposition from veterans.

Clearly, the VA agrees that there are legitimate concerns being raised, so much so that it has commissioned a \$1.3 million study of the program by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. The evaluation, "Assessment of the Care and Use of Dogs in Research Funded by or Conducted at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs," is scheduled to produce two reports and be completed "in mid-2020."

While the VA awaits the results of this independent evaluation of the necessity of the agency's dog testing, we request that the VA suspend all ongoing dog testing and postpone the review and approval of any new projects until the results of the National Academies study are published.

As you are aware, the VA has already canceled several invasive dog studies that it initially approved after a secondary review revealed the availability of alternatives or that the work was otherwise unnecessary. We believe that the National Academies will find this to be the case for other current VA dog experiments as well. In the meantime, it would be inappropriate to use taxpayers' money, dogs, and other VA resources for research that may ultimately be deemed wasteful and scientifically unjustifiable.

Sincerely,



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Brendan J. Boyle
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



Ann Kuster
Member of Congress



Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Nannette Barragan
Member of Congress