



BEAGLE FREEDOM PROJECT

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Dear Adopter,

Thank you for participating in Beagle Freedom Project's Identity Campaign and advocating on behalf of an individual dog or cat who is (or was) imprisoned in a laboratory.

While nearly all of you have gone through the steps to try to acquire records related to what is happening to your "adopted" animal, many of you are passionate to do more for your animal. BFP is thrilled that so many of our supporters are motivated to help animals in laboratories, so we've compiled a few suggestions on things you can do to help speak out for your animal and the thousands of other dogs and cats abused and killed in U.S. laboratories.

1. Unless you have reason to believe your dog or cat has already been released or killed, **ask the laboratory to do the right thing and release your adopted dog or cat to a credible rescue organization.** Cats and dogs deserve to live in a caring home with people who will respect them and treat them like a member of the family. Giving an animal a number instead of a name and treating them like furry test tubes is simply wrong. The alternative to this testing is simple – start treating dogs and cats like individuals who deserve respect and kindness. Every laboratory that uses dogs and cats in experiments could change course tomorrow and release their animals to rescue organizations like Beagle Freedom Project, but that won't happen without public pressure.

BFP has a sample letter you can use as a guide, but it is important that you also personalize your letter. You can then send the letter to the university's administration and also the laboratory's animal care and use committee. ***Even if we are only able to save one more life, it makes the world of difference to that animal.***

2. **Write a letter to the editor and/or contact local reporters.** Because media attention has the ability to reach so many people, getting pro-animal coverage is critical. The laboratories understand that support for animal experimentation plummets when the public starts to learn about what actually happens to dogs and cats in testing. That's why they so often resist releasing records that reveal the truth about what happens and also why

they almost never allow the public or the media to have a tour of their facility.

Using your participation in the BFP Identity Campaign, you can help garner media attention to this issue and shine a light on this secretive practice. Research newspaper and television reporters who you think might be interested in writing about the experimentation occurring at the animal where your animal is housed. Look for reporters in the area where you are located, as well as in the area surrounding the laboratory where your animal is being held. If you have any personal contacts with representatives in the press, use those too!

When you approach press, there's a few different angles you could take. If the laboratory is trying to charge you exorbitant fees for the records related to your animal, or if they refusing to hand over records at all, then emphasize to the reporter that this lack of transparency is troubling and anti-democratic, especially in light of the fact that these laboratories are public institutions and the vast majority of the research occurring there is funded with federal tax money. The fact that so many universities are trying to keep their records secret raises legitimate questions about what they are trying to conceal.

If the laboratory has released records to you, then tell the story of what happened to your dog or cat. BFP is currently dealing with a backlog, but we will get around to writing a brief biography of the animals for whom we have records, including your animal. Feel free to use this biography.

Emphasize that a growing segment of the public is concerned about the treatment of animals, and using animals who have been specifically bred to be our companions in cruel and deadly experiments represents a betrayal. Even if the laboratory has already killed your adopted animal, you can still tell your animal's story and help spark an important conversation. The laboratories do not remember their nameless, faceless victims, so it is important that we fight for them, even if it is *in memoriam*.

3. **Contact your elected representatives.** The laws governing the use of animals in experimentation are incredibly weak. Often, the only applicable law is the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), even though this law allows for any experiment on any animal to be performed on any animal, no matter how pointless or cruel, so long as the right paperwork is filled out.

However, as voters and as American citizens who care about animals, we can demand better. The AWA makes clear that any state or local government may issue its own standards governing the use of animals in research, and that these standards can exceed the bare minimum standards contained in the AWA.

Reach out to your city or county council member as well as your state representatives and ask that they support legislation that strengthens the protections offered animals in laboratories. They could support a “Right to Release” law, like those on the books in Nevada and Minnesota, that would require laboratories to release dogs and cats to loving homes at the end of experimentation.

Many states also specifically exempt animals from protection under state cruelty laws if they are being used in experiments – you could also urge your elected officials to remove these pro-cruelty exemptions.

Additionally, you could ask them to strengthen the state open records law to make clear that documentation related to taxpayer-funded animal research shall always be a matter of public record.

BFP has sample letters to help guide you as you reach out to elected representatives, but it is important that you add your personal touch to these letters. Elected officials get a lot of correspondence that looks like a form letter, so it’s key that your correspondence be personalized to help grab their attention. And phone calls and office visits can often be more effective in grabbing their attention.

4. **Spread the word on social media.** Many people still don’t know that thousands of dogs and cats are abused and in testing laboratories – and even fewer know that this cruelty is occurring at several state universities, financed with their tax dollars! Share the story of what the laboratory did to your virtually adopted animal on social media, and let your animal’s story be a jumping off point for a discussion on the issue.

Even if you still don’t know what happened to your animal because the laboratory is trying to keep their veterinary records secret, you can share the story of your struggle to learn the truth. Even people who support animal research will usually agree that it’s important that we have a well-informed discussion about this topic. By restricting access to the information about what kinds of experiments are occurring, the laboratories are undemocratically stifling the discussion before it can even happen.

As many of you have seen firsthand, animal research laboratories try everything in their power to maintain secrecy. They depend on secrecy because transparency represents a threat to the status quo. Public opinion always turns against this cruel practice once the facts see the light of day, and the animal experimentation industry knows it. As an Identity Campaign adopter, you are playing a vital role in prying these laboratories open and spreading awareness in the media and to the public at large. On behalf of the animals imprisoned in laboratory cages, BFP thanks you for your compassion and determination.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Beckham
Identity Campaign Coordinator
Beagle Freedom Project