



August 5, 2008

The Honorable Gloria Romero  
 Chair, Senate Public Safety Committee  
 State Capitol, Room 2031  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

***Re: Assembly Bill 2296 (Mullin): Animal Enterprise Protection Act***  
***Position: Support***

State Government  
 Relations

Veronica Villalobos  
 Director

The University of Southern California (USC) supports Assembly Bill 2296 (Mullin), which creates the Animal Enterprise Protection Act. The bill seeks to address the alarming increase in violence by animal rights extremists toward university faculty involved in scientific research. This bill would strengthen California's laws to provide victims of violence or threat of violence with additional tools to protect their identity and prosecute such acts.

The University of Southern California supports enhancing state law in this area, which would help retain researchers who are conducting life altering, scientific research that requires the use of animal models (e.g. Parkinson disease research). Unfortunately, due to the nature of federal law, prosecution of harassment/violence has been very limited. Concerns by researchers for their safety and that of their families are increasing, particularly as the acts become more violent. For example, two life-threatening firebombing incidences occurred this past weekend targeting researchers and their families at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Assembly Bill 2296 is a first step in addressing this public safety issue. The bill was significantly amended to address various concerns regarding individuals' First Amendment rights, and as proposed will address the issue of trespassing (to incite fear and violent acts) on the private property of academic researchers. The bill strengthens the penal code to make trespassing onto the property of any academic researcher for the purpose of "chilling or interfering with the researcher's academic freedom" a misdemeanor.

The University of Southern California urges the support of Assembly Bill 2296 (Mullin), which signals to the public the state's opposition to the increasing violence against researchers. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Veronica Villalobos". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Veronica Villalobos

cc: Assembly member Gene Mullin  
 Members, Senate Public Safety  
 Jerome McGuire, Consultant, Senate Public Safety Committee  
 Laura Enderton, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus

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