

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about dogs and animal testing.

While Parliamentary Private Secretaries do not by convention sign Early Day Motions, I am proud that the UK has consistently led the way on animal welfare, and it is right that we cement our status as a global leader by continuing to raise the bar. I am pleased that the Government's first-of-its-kind Action Plan for Animal Welfare committed to maintaining high standards of protection where procedures are undertaken on live animals for scientific or educational purposes.

The use of animals in scientific research remains a vital tool in improving our understanding of how biological systems work in health and disease, and in the development of new medicines, treatments and technologies. However, animals are only used in research when there are no suitable alternatives, and any tests are carried out under controls that keep suffering to a minimum. This is known as the last-resort principle, which will be retained and strengthened in the Environment Bill. I am opposed to animal tests where alternative approaches could be used.

Like you, I welcomed the introduction of the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill to Parliament. This Bill will not only enshrine recognition of animal sentience in domestic law, but will also establish an expert-led Animal Sentience Committee, which will produce reports on the impact of policy decisions on animal welfare. Further, I am pleased that the new Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act has enabled tougher prison sentences for the most serious perpetrators of animal cruelty, from the previous maximum of six months to up to five years. The maximum five-year sentence is one of the toughest punishments in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare.

I hope this offers you some reassurance that this Government is deeply committed to maintaining the very highest standards of animal welfare in research.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*Yours sincerely
Peter Gibson*

PETER GIBSON MP

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