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July 11, 2017

Senator Jason Lewis
Massachusetts State House, Room 511B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Kate Hogan
Massachusetts State House, Room 130
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Lewis and Representative Hogan,

On behalf of the Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals (COBTH), I would like to express our strong opposition to **House Bill 2454**, *An Act relative to the adoption of animals used in research*, which requires research institutions to offer dogs and cats used in studies for adoption or to animal rescue organizations.

The adoption of animals used in research in Massachusetts is not a new issue. Research facilities have long-standing, carefully vetted relationships with individuals and agencies that have experience caring for the welfare of research animals after their use in studies. These facilities work closely with other members of the Massachusetts Society for Medical Research (MSMR) to craft policies that shape the adoption process and make the transition from institution to adoption agency as smooth as possible for both researchers and animals. The policy guidelines developed by MSMR members take into account the type of research conducted and whether the dogs or cats, often bred specifically for research purposes, are suitable for adoption. The use of animals in research, particularly the biomedical studies conducted at some hospitals, faces a number of regulations which the animal shelters and rescues in Massachusetts are not briefed on, nor are they required to follow. Animals studied receive specialized veterinary care, which can often be necessary for their post-research health and well-being. The legislation as proposed will disrupt existing adoption policies and potentially allow unregulated, unreliable individuals and organizations to take on former research animals for which they are unprepared.

Hospitals in Massachusetts receive large amounts of federal funding for health research, which often relies on the participation of animals in studies. This legislation is likely to have a chilling effect, if enacted as written. Altering or complicating the current post-study adoption process is likely to deter investigators from applying for or being granted research projects, driving research advancement and federal funding out of the Commonwealth.

Additionally, under current practices, adoption arrangements guided by members of the MSMR often contain provisions regarding return. These provisions protect research animals from abandonment and prevent them from ending up in shelters. Because this legislation opens the door to allow any Massachusetts shelter or animal rescue to take in research animals, and because Massachusetts shelters and animal rescues are not required to report rates of adoption or euthanasia, research institutions and MSMR have no way of tracking what percentage of animals are returned and/ or put down.

COBTH and its member hospitals thank you for the opportunity to express opposition to this legislation and respectfully urge that you report unfavorably on **HB.2454**. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Erwin".

John Erwin
Executive Director