Irene Campbell MP
Member of Parliament for North Ayrshire and Arran
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 2432

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The Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you in my role as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Phasing Out Animal Experiments in Medical Research. I wanted to congratulate you again on your appointment, introduce the Group, and suggest ways in which we could support delivery of the Government's manifesto commitment on phasing out animal testing.

The purpose of the APPG is to build cross-party support for replacing animal experiments in medical research with human-specific methods, working closely with the scientific community to identify opportunities, barriers and put forward constructive recommendations to government.

During a debate in April, then Minister The Rt Hon Ian Murray MP commented that the APPG's goals are 'almost the same aims as what the Government are trying to achieve through the [Replacing Animals in Science] strategy. We and the APPG are aligned in the outcome we want.'

As well as strong cross-party membership (57 MPs and peers), the APPG benefits from an outstanding network of scientific experts. Secretariat support is provided by Animal Free Research UK, a leading charity enabling scientists to transition from animal experiments to human-specific techniques. The APPG organises dynamic events that connect parliamentarians with leading scientists and submits expert evidence to Government. The Group has meet twice with Lord Patrick Vallance who had been leading the Government's work in this area.

While I welcomed the Government's Replacing Animals in Science Strategy, I believe that stronger action is now needed to deliver our manifesto commitment on phasing out animal testing. For example, Animal Free Research UK recommends the introduction of Herbie's Law, which would set a goal of phasing out animal experiments over the next decade, supporting scientists with the transition. Public and parliamentary support for this approach is already clear: polling has found that seven in ten people in Britain support legislation of this kind, and Herbie's Law is backed by more than 190 MPs and Peers.

The APPG is keen to provide expert input that would strengthen the Government's work on phasing out animal testing. By way of example, we could organise roundtable discussions with experts leading the development of non-animal methods or arrange for you to visit a laboratory where this work is taking place. The APPG is also keen to support the new Alternative Methods Expert Committee (AMEC), building on the recent recommendations from the Animals in Science Committee (ASC), including through ex-officio membership or convening experts to provide technical evidence.

Parliamentary Office:
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Email: irene.campbell.mp@parliament.uk

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Whilst I appreciate that you will be exceptionally busy over the coming weeks, I would be delighted to meet with you whenever convenient to discuss this further. If there is any information that would be useful in the meantime, please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely,

Irene Campbell MP
Chair of All-Party Parliamentary Group on Phasing Out Animal Experiments in Medical Research

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