This is the true story of Rocky, a beloved companion animal which, through a nightmarish chain of events, wound up in a research laboratory, where it died, alone and miles from home, far from the familiar faces of its owner and family.

Rocky, a friendly mixed-breed dog, escaped from the heated garage where it spent its days, when a neighbor accidentally let it out.

When Rocky's owner contacted the county pound, he was told Rocky was not there. Three days later he was told that Rocky had been there but was adopted by another family. When the county humane agent checked the pound's records, he found that Rocky had been sold to a known "buncher," or animal dealer, who bought dogs from pounds for resale to research laboratories.

A frantic race against time began. It took the insistence of law-enforcement officials to make the dealer allow humane agents to search his kennels. He would not let them look at his records and insisted he had never had Rocky.

But he had—and he had sold Rocky to a Pennsylvania dealer. From there, Rocky went to an east coast research facility, where it was finally tracked down just days too late. Rocky had been "sacrificed" in an experiment.

It's almost impossible to imagine what Rocky must have gone through. Any pet that goes from a familiar home to a shelter, and thence to dealers and finally to a research lab, must feel bewilderment and fright. Undoubtedly, up to the last moment Rocky was still watching for the face of its owner, waiting for him to come and take it home.

Rocky was a victim of pound seizure, the archaic practice of allowing shelter and pound animals to be used for research pur-
Kept on tight chains and seldom fed or watered, former pets may suffer the agonies of the animal slave trade before they are sold to researchers, only to suffer even more in the laboratory.

It's too late to save Rocky—but it's not too late to save thousands of other pets from the misery and fear that await them at the end of the pound-seizure road, animals that are accustomed to friendly faces and that have enjoyed a warm and fulfilling relationship with people. Legislation is now before Congress that would effectively eliminate the use of shelter dogs and cats in experiments, since it stipulates that researchers who use shelter animals are ineligible for federal funding—the Pet Protection Act.

In the U.S. House of Representatives, the Pet Protection Act is H.R. 778, introduced by Representative Robert J. Mrazek. In the U.S. Senate, the Pet Protection Act is S. 457, introduced by Senator Wendell Ford. Both bills prohibit pound seizure by denying federal funds to anyone who "obtains or uses any animal acquired directly or indirectly from any animal shelter." In addition, S. 457 effectively prevents the stealing of pets for use in research by stipulating that federally funded researchers may not acquire any animal from "individuals who have not bred and raised such animal on their own premises...." S. 457 eliminates all middlemen, the brokers and bunchers who are the link between pets and research laboratories. Passage of the Pet Protection Act would spell an end to the unnecessary suffering of an estimated 150,000 pet animals taken from the nation's shelters each year for use in questionable research experiments and unnecessary teaching demonstrations.

It was easy to pick out the former pets among the research animals. They were the ones that would run up to you in the holding pens and lean against you, as if to ask, "Are you the person who's going to take me home?" Picking up one of those friendly animals and putting it on the table to work on it was like picking up my own dog. It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do.

—former laboratory worker

The Pet Protection Act is not a challenge to the use of animals in research, and its passage would not bring necessary, life-saving research to a halt. What it will do is simply protect our pets, animals whose use in research is inappropriate and of dubious value. Our pets will benefit, our communities will benefit, and scientific research itself will benefit.

First of all, consider numbers. The fraction of the millions of animals used in research that comes from pounds and shelters is so small—less than 1 percent—that to say shelter animals are essential to research, as the medical community does, is obviously absurd. Research can easily continue without these "specimens."

Secondly, pound and shelter animals do not make good subjects for research, and their use is not economical. Nothing is known about their medical histories, genetic makeup, or environmental backgrounds. Such unknown and uncontrollable factors add undesirable variability to the experiments, often necessitating the use of more shelter animals than would otherwise be required and the repetition of entire experiments, with even more animals. Eliminating the use of such poor experimental subjects could actually improve the quality, accuracy, and reliability of research results.

Experiments often cite cost as a principal factor in their choice to use shelter animals in research, but it can actually be more expensive to use pound animals, since they must undergo expensive medical conditioning and quarantining before they can even be used in experiments. Steven Levenson, Jr., writes that to breed and raise an animal to research specifications costs about $1,500, whereas a pound animal costs $25 to purchase and about $100 in medical care, and they cannot be used in experiments, since they must undergo expensive medical conditioning and quarantining before they can even be used in experiments. If the researchers request former pets—the friendly animals that are easy to work with—over strays or temperamentally unsuitable animals—the very animals most likely to be adopted into responsible new homes—pound seizure undermines public confidence in local shelters and animal-control agencies, and people may stop cooperating with their programs. What family would take its pet to a shelter, if they could no longer keep it, if they knew that it would end up in a laboratory? The researchers request former pets—the friendly animals that are easy to work with—over strays or temperamentally unsuitable animals—the very animals most likely to be adopted into responsible new homes. If people are unwilling to take animals to a shelter they may abandon them, thus adding to the stray-animal population and aggravating the pet-overpopulation problem, which means that even more animals will suffer. Passage of the Pet Protection Act would help restore public faith in shelters and pounds, and, ultimately, help animal-control agencies to implement their programs, programs designed to reduce animal suffering.

Fifth, what of our responsibility to our pets themselves? To ship former pets off to laboratories where they are likely to encounter a stressful existence and painful experiments that yield questionable results is to betray their trust in us. If shelter animals cannot be used with their human companions or adopted into new homes, shelters have an obligation to end their unnecessary painful existence and monitor the progress of laboratory experiments that yield questionable results. If shelter animals cannot be used with their human companions or adopted into new homes, shelters have an obligation to end their unnecessary painful existence and monitor the progress of laboratory experiments and therefore be required and the repetition of entire experiments, with even more animals. Eliminating the use of such poor experimental subjects could actually improve the quality, accuracy, and reliability of research results.

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This hapless dog was used as a chronic animal model in a pulmonary vascular injury study at a major university. Picture your pet in its place!
Others were so well trained that they would bond to people and look to us as companions. "Former pets are bonded to people and look to us as companions," says Dr. David Fanfarillo, HSUS associate director of laboratory animals and a former laboratory researcher who worked with shelter animals. "To use them as research subjects is a betrayal of their trust in us. The dogs I saw in laboratories that had been former pets were all distraught and anxious. Some literally made themselves so sick with worry and tension that they had to be euthanatized. Others were so well trained that they would not urinate or defecate in their cages. They would die, in great pain, from burst bladders or strangulated bowels. All because they were former pets and had been taught to love and trust humans." There is an important difference in the quality of death between humane euthanasia at a shelter and an important difference in the quality of death in a laboratory, which may not come until after a long period of stress and suffering.

The former pets used for the chronic studies—animals who were operated on repeatedly—were the worst. They would just stare at us with their eyes, as if to ask, "Why are you doing this to us?" Those dogs looked to us for affection and attention, but instead they got constant pain and suffering. They had no way of understanding why they were there.

—former laboratory worker

The Humane Society of the United States has worked long and hard to put an end to pound seizure. Since 1985 we have been a moving force in the National Coalition to Protect Our Pets (Pro-Pets), dedicated to combat the practice of re-releasing animals from shelters and animal-control facilities for research. Our work has paid off with the introduction of H.R. 778 and S. 1457, but now we must fight harder than ever to ensure the passage of these bills. We face formidable opposition—the medical community is fighting every step of the way to protect its access to an unlimited supply of cheap animals, and it has powerful support. Although research would not be harmed by the banning of pound seizure, researchers want this indefensible practice to continue. They want our pets—and, unless we fight them, they will have them!

If you lost a beloved pet, for whatever reason, could you live with the thought that it might be sold as a laboratory "specimen"? Of course not. Yet as long as the research community continues to perceive shelters as cheap, dependable, and inexhaustible resources that can be easily exploited, it has no incentive to utilize more appropriate alternatives available. The terrible specter of our families' pets in federally funded research labs will disappear only when the Pet Protection Act is passed. Now is our chance to speak up on behalf of our pets and demand that Congress enact the Pet Protection Act and stop the horror of pound seizure.

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**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

- Send the enclosed postcards to your representative and senators to let them know you support the passage of the Pet Protection Act and wish them to do so, too. If you can, follow up with a more personal letter and/or a phone call, and use the information in this Close-Up Report to stress the need for this important legislation. (All representatives can be addressed as The Honorable , U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Senators can be addressed as The Honorable , U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510. Congressional switchboard: 202-224-3121.)
- Order extra postcards, and send as many as possible. Senators and congressmen pay attention to numbers, so it is crucial that they be deluged with demands to support the Pet Protection Act. For additional postcards, send $1.50 for every ten sets (thirty cards) with the enclosed reply card.
- It is imperative that efforts to ban pound seizure continue at both state and local levels. If you are involved in such a campaign, please intensify your efforts. If you wish to launch an anti-pound-seizure campaign in your area, contact the HSUS laboratory animals department for assistance.

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