

October 8, 2015

Dr. Rush Holt
Chief Executive Officer
American Association for the Advancement of Science
1200 New York Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dr. Marcia K. McNutt
Editor-in-Chief, *Science* family of journals
American Association for the Advancement of Science
1200 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Mr. Tim Appenzeller
News Editor, *Science*
American Association for the Advancement of Science
1200 New York Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Drs. Holt, McNutt and Mr. Appenzeller:

We are writing to express our concerns with the recent coverage in *ScienceInsider* featuring the Beagle Freedom Project, an animal activist organization. The fact that a publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science has seemingly become a mouthpiece for an organization counting among its officers a felon convicted under the federal Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act is very troubling. Further it is difficult to imagine how continuously featuring the efforts of animal rights groups dedicated to ending animal research advances science, which is embodied in the very name, AAAS.

The most recent example of such anti-science reporting has been written by a member of the *Science* staff who appears to have his own agenda. The article in question highlights the efforts of a group dedicated to eliminating canines as a proven and valued animal model, and it is worth noting this author also published a book that appears to advocate human legal protections for canines. The article demonstrates a clear bias. The same author also recently devoted multiple pages in *Science* to a lengthy profile of an animal rights activist working for PETA. NABR expressed its dismay with this unprecedented coverage in the pages of *Science* in a letter to Dr. McNutt and to your predecessor, Dr. Alan Leshner on January 26, 2015. AAAS and its related science publications have provided extensive coverage which either directly or by implication negatively portray animals as research models. A partial listing of stories is included below:

- September 17, 2015** – *Nature* changes animal policy after cancer study comes under fire
- August 21, 2015** – Crowdsourcing animal research
- August 18, 2015** - Has U.S. biomedical research on chimpanzees come to an end?
- August 12, 2015** - Animal advocacy group targets cat and dog research using novel crowdsourcing campaign
- July 30, 2015** - Judge rules research chimps are not 'legal persons'
- July 10, 2015** - Use of regulated animals in U.S. biomedical research falls to lowest levels on record
- June 12, 2015** - The scientist behind the 'personhood' chimps

June 12, 2015 - Research chimps to be listed as 'endangered'
April 20, 2015 - Judge's ruling grants legal right to research chimps
April 16, 2015 - How dogs stole our hearts
April 13, 2015 - Monkey deaths prompt probe of Harvard primate facility
January 23, 2015 - The insurgent (lengthy profile of PETA activist Justin Goodman)
January 22, 2015 - Slideshow: PETA's crusade against animal research
August 29, 2014 - Animal welfare accreditation called into question
December 6, 2013 - Lawsuits Seek 'Personhood' for Chimpanzees
February 26, 2010 - Dog Dealers' Days May Be Numbered

In reference to the August 29, 2014 article "Animal welfare accreditation called into question," *Science* chose to highlight a study in which the authors are not only affiliated with a well-known animal activist group, but who also refuse to share the data supporting their study making it unreproducible. In essence, *Science* ran a story about a study whose authors have adopted a position that AAAS, most other scientific publishers, and funding agencies reject; a policy that could easily invite fraud, dishonesty and questionable science. It is incomprehensible that *Science* would then choose to honor one of these activist authors with a lengthy and biased profile.

To the best of our knowledge, AAAS publications are not in the practice of publishing articles that provide a platform to other special interests with political agendas such as anti-climate change, pro-tobacco, anti-GMO or anti-human embryonic stem cells. This leaves us to question why *Science* has devoted so much time and space specifically to individuals and organizations opposed to essential basic and biomedical animal research.

There has been significant coverage in *The Atlantic*, *PBS NewsHour*, and most recently the *New York Times* highlighting the role of the chimpanzee model in vaccine research which aims to protect wild chimpanzee populations from devastating Ebola outbreaks. These articles rightly question whether policy makers have acted too hastily in making research with chimpanzees in the U.S. more difficult, and in some cases, impossible. Yet AAAS publications seem to have spoken with their silence by providing no coverage on this contentious debate. Many biomedical researchers are now questioning whether AAAS publications have abandoned their biomedical research constituents in favor of groups with animal rights agendas.

We strongly urge AAAS to support biomedical research and the scientific community, and to maintain the high standard of reporting excellence that has defined *Science* and *ScienceInsider*. Your own constituents in the research community and the many members of the public respect AAAS' commitment to scientific rigor and factual evidence. We are hopeful that your recent detour into animal rights hyperbole, personal opinion, and special interests is an aberration that will be corrected. In the meantime we will keep our members well-informed with regard to these concerns.

Sincerely,



Frankie L. Trull
President
NABR