The Great Ape Protection and Cost Saving Act of 2011 (S. 810/ H.R. 1513) would ban all lifesaving research involving chimpanzees. Chimpanzees are a unique and invaluable resource for ethically conducted biomedical research, particularly translational research through which scientific discoveries are advanced into treatments and cures. The research community and AAU are committed to ensuring that such research not only conforms with ethical, legal, and safety regulations but also maintains the highest standards of animal care and health.

A 2011 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *The Use of Chimpanzees in Biomedical and Behavioral Research: Assessing the Necessity*, stated: “This report does not endorse an outright ban on chimpanzee research.” It went on to say, “Of the many animals used in research, the chimpanzees genetic proximity to humans and the resulting biological and behavioral characteristics make it a uniquely valuable species for certain types of research.”

AAU supports the IOM report’s recommendations.

**CHIMPANZEES ARE CRITICAL AND NECESSARY TO ADVANCE MEDICAL RESEARCH**

- As stated in the IOM report, “Chimpanzees and humans are the only two species that are susceptible to the Hepatitis C (HCV) infection. Currently, no other suitable animal models exist for evaluation of a prophylactic HCV vaccine.” As many as 3.9 million people in the U.S. alone are chronically infected with hepatitis C, leading to 12,000 deaths per year. Chimpanzees were critical to the development of vaccines for hepatitis A and B, as well as recent breakthrough antiviral therapies for hepatitis C, and remain critical to the ongoing quest for a hepatitis C vaccine.

- In addition, scientists rely on chimpanzees to study a host of other infectious diseases. These include respiratory syncitial virus (RSV), which can cause severe, untreatable, and sometimes fatal infections in infants, children, and the elderly, leading to nearly 180,000 hospitalizations per year; and human cytomegalovirus, which the CDC cites as the most common congenital infection in the U.S., causing one child to become disabled per hour. According to the IOM study, “The chimpanzee may be required in the future for testing of novel vaccines because of the ability of the chimpanzee to serve as an early surrogate model for seronegative infants.”

**USE OF CHIMPANZEES IN MEDICAL RESEARCH IS HIGHLY REGULATED**

- The welfare of animals, including chimpanzees, used in federally funded medical research is protected through a strict framework of regulations at both the federal and institutional level. Laws and policies of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and...
The university research community takes seriously compliance with laws and policies governing the treatment of laboratory animals, including chimpanzees. This obligation requires effective training and education of investigators and service personnel, as well as rigorous regulation and oversight of animal research.

The welfare and use of animals in research is continuously monitored to ensure the minimum number of animals is being used, that there is scientific justification for using a given species, and that animals receive humane and proper care and housing appropriate to each species. Any violation of the laws, policies, and rules governing the use of animal subjects in research carries severe penalties for the individuals and institutions involved.

**RESEARCH THAT DIRECTLY BENEFITS GREAT APES WILL BE HARMED**

The Great Ape Protection and Cost Savings Act would halt all research involving chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans, bonobos, and gibbons, including research intended to improve the health of these animals in the wild and captivity.

Ebola is devastating wild populations of chimpanzees and gorillas, having already killed nearly one-third of wild gorillas. Researchers are currently testing an Ebola vaccine designed to be used on wild gorillas and chimpanzees to protect them from extinction, studies which would be halted by this bill.

Some species of great apes suffer unique heart conditions and neurologic degeneration in captivity. Veterinary research designed to understand and treat these conditions, which may be as simple as taking regular blood samples, could be disrupted by passage of this legislation.

**IOM REPORT AND NIH ACTION**

The IOM report, The Use of Chimpanzees in Biomedical and Behavioral Research, establishes a set of uniform, though restrictive, criteria to guide current and future research use of chimpanzees to treat, prevent or control public health challenges. Subsequently, NIH has adopted the report’s recommendations and has set up a Working Group on the Use of Chimpanzees in NIH-Funded Research, which is developing an additional review system to ensure the use of chimpanzees in research only when absolutely necessary.