

**SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
AB 2296 – THE CALIFORNIA ANIMAL ENTERPRISE PROTECTION ACT**

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**Testimony by
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[Remarks as prepared for delivery; not an official transcript]

Good morning, Madam Chair and Members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you.

My name is Karen Alberts. I am a sergeant in the criminal investigations bureau for the UC Berkeley Police Department. I am here today to voice my support for AB 2296.

You are probably well aware of the fire-bombings that recently occurred at two researcher's homes in Santa Cruz. These incidents were an unfortunate example of how animal rights extremists are becoming more aggressive in their terrorist tactics against university faculty and staff. These latest actions endangered the lives of two children, age 6 and 7, along with their mother and father and destroyed another researcher's vehicle. Unfortunately, these are not isolated attacks. They are part of a campaign of terror by animal rights extremists, who show no regard for human life.

In the last year, UC faculty and staff have been targets of arson, bombings, vandalism, intimidation and harassment, both at work and at their homes. UC researchers and staff – along with their spouses and children – live in daily fear for their safety. The escalation of violence has grown at an alarming rate. Personal home addresses, phone numbers, and pictures of researchers are posted on extremists' websites and used to launch campaigns against individuals and their families.

In the East Bay, seven law enforcement agencies are currently investigating more than seventy animal research related incidents. These are not random acts of vandalism – they are concerted, well orchestrated campaigns of harassment meant to intimidate and terrorize individuals, many of whom are involved in potentially life-saving research.

Since August of 2007, after personal information was posted online, extremists have targeted at least thirty one researchers and staff members at UC Berkeley alone. Prior to the posting of this information, there had been only three incidents reported during the previous five years.

Countless death threats accompanied by statements that "we know where you live" have been received via e-mail and telephone. These are not empty threats. Extremists have repeatedly visited these researchers' homes, often in the middle of the night, concealing their faces with bandanas. They throw rocks at homes, break windows, vandalize cars, bang on front doors, and yell threats through bullhorns.

At UC Berkeley, 20 criminal incidents of home property damage have been documented within the last year. In February, six masked extremists tried to storm a UC Santa Cruz researcher's home during a children's birthday party and assaulted her husband. That same month, UCLA researchers were targeted. A bomb that failed to detonate was found under a researcher's car, and in January a colleague's home was firebombed. The Animal Liberation Front has claimed responsibility for many of these acts. This group, designated "domestic terrorists" by the FBI, uses the internet as a tool to share tactics and recruit other extremists.

It is time for the State to extend to researchers the same protections granted to elected officials and reproductive health workers. It is time to enact legislation that gives law enforcement the tools necessary to protect researchers from the extremists who terrorize them. This bill, by creating a new

misdemeanor for the public posting of the personal information of researchers and a new misdemeanor for trespass, does just that.

If these groups are successful, in the end, it is the public who suffers. The University of California has played a critical role in health and life science research that has led to scientific breakthroughs and medical therapies that benefit all of society. Along with counterparts at Stanford, Caltech and USC, the advancements made from university research have and continue to benefit the greater good.

I urge you to support AB 2296 and am happy to answer any questions you may have.