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# Metcalfe-Hatch Fact Sheet

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*Coalition to Abolish Metcalfe-Hatch*

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# COALITION TO ABOLISH METCALF-HATCH

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## METCALF-HATCH FACT SHEET

### WHAT IT IS

The Metcalf-Hatch Act forces tax supported pounds and shelters to turn over unwanted cats and dogs to New York laboratories. This creates difficulties for shelters/pounds. People who are aware of Metcalf-Hatch (MH) will tend to abandon animals rather than risk having them recycled into labs. And this places additional tax burdens on communities for rounding up abandoned strays. The cost of stray animals is already \$400 million a year in the USA.

### HISTORY OF METCALF-HATCH

MH was passed in 1952 despite popular opposition. It remains so unpopular, it cannot be enforced. There has been a steady decline since 1971 when 13,700 cats and dogs were seized, to 1978 when 1,100 cats and dogs were seized. And this must be seen within the context of an estimated 100 million lab animals including 500,000 to 2 million cats and dogs used every year in the USA. The NY State Assembly voted to Repeal MH on 2/15/78 by 119 to 16. In 1977 the Assembly voted Repeal to 110 to 22. But it was never permitted to reach the floor of the Senate. The Washington based National Society for Medical Research (NSMR) has boasted that their "major effort" stifled Repeal of MH (NSMR Bulletin 8/77, 9/78) which indicates an orchestration by special interests.

### OTHER STATES

NY remains one among only ten states to force the seizure of lab animals. Eight states absolutely forbid it: California, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. No serious claim can be made that science has suffered in the 40 states which do not force abandoned pets into labs.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

Metcalf-Hatch, saves labs a possible total of \$30,000 a year. This is more than offset by the additional costs of people abandoning animals instead of turning them in to shelters. If tax monies is the real issue, then an appropriate thrust is a General Accounting Office probe of the entire \$3 billion a year tax supported lab animal syndicate. In Rochester (NY) alone, researchers took in \$14,500,000 of federal funds, in one year, just through the National Institutes of Health.

### RESEARCH IMPACT

The National Academy of Sciences reported that among pound cats, "mortality rates in cats arriving at research facilities often reached 30%. As one might expect, many of the survivors were unsuitable for experimental purposes" (1978). Dean Robert Von Citters of the University of Washington School of Medicine ridiculed "the use of the semi-starved, anemic pound animal." Meanwhile, Senator Edward Kennedy has called for greater support to develop alternatives to animal testing. And Donald Kennedy, head of the Food & Drug Administration admitted that "compared with most other contemporary biological techniques, animal testing is crude, cumbersome and expensive" (Human Nature 5/78).

### WHY MH REPEAL IS IMPORTANT

MH sets the precedent for laws which abuse the rights of animals and abuse the rights of citizens who care about animals. MH encourages the throwaway ethic that lab animals are cheap "tools" instead of modernizing and sensitizing biomedical research. MH runs counter to the changing morality among creative, productive researchers. Thus, the Federation of American Scientists, sponsored by 40 Nobel Prize Laureates devoted an entire report to animal rights.

### WHAT WILL THE COALITION DO?

The Coalition will bring animal rights into politics. It will hold legislators accountable, at election time, for their MH Repeal action or inaction record. It will hold political parties responsible for committee chairpersons and majority/minority leaders who stifle the democratic process. It will utilize the Freedom of Information Act and calls for GAO probes of institutions, experimenters and officials who further special interests.

Prepared by Henry Spira