Physicians Committee Scientists Oppose Personal Care Products Safety Act Unless Explicit Ban on Animal Testing is Included

The purpose of the Personal Care Products Safety Act (S.1014) is to strengthen the regulation of cosmetics and cosmetic ingredients to ensure safety. While the Physicians Committee fully supports efforts to ensure cosmetics products are safe, this bill has serious flaws.

To be effective, S.1014 must drive regulatory science forward and ban animal testing for cosmetics. Any legislative efforts to reform the safety assessment of cosmetics must include assurances that such information will be obtained using human-relevant methods, not animals.

New regulations should embrace efficient cell- and computer-based testing and assessment strategies. If enacted as currently drafted, S.1014 will lead to an increase in misleading and inhumane animal tests and delay protection from dangerous chemicals.

In 2013, the marketing, import, and sale of animal-tested cosmetic products and ingredients became illegal in the EU. The EU Cosmetics Directive couples a high safety bar for cosmetics with a ban on animal testing. Like Israel and India, it takes the extra step to ban animal-tested products and ingredients from being sold in the EU if animal testing occurred anywhere in the world. In addition to developing methods that are more accurate for predicting human health effects, the bans will save the lives of countless rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, and rats who suffer and die for cosmetics testing.

If an explicit ban on animal testing were included, this legislation would inspire cosmetics companies and the Food and Drug Administration to shift the focus away from inefficient animal-based tests to modern testing methods that are relevant for human safety. To ensure human safety and spur advancements in nonanimal test methods, Congress should ban animal testing for cosmetic products and ingredients as has been done in the EU, Israel, and India.

Congressional intent must be clear: No animal, human or nonhuman, should be harmed for the next shade of mascara or lipstick.