



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2021

*Jean Combricent,*

**RE: ANIMAL TESTING – EDM 175**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding animal testing and the recent demonstrations in Cambridgeshire, with specific reference to EDM 175.

Specifically regarding Early Day Motion (EDM) 175, notwithstanding the fact that as a Government Minister I am unable to sign EDMs, in any event, I have general concerns about the effectiveness and expense of the EDM system, and I think it is much more effective to raise concerns directly with Ministers, both verbally, and in writing, rather than signing EDMs. With that in mind, I have relayed your concerns to my ministerial colleagues.

I am proud that the UK has consistently led the way on animal welfare, and it is right that we cement our status as a global leader by continuing to raise the bar. I am pleased that the Government's first of its kind 'Action Plan for Animal Welfare' committed to maintaining high standards of protection where procedures are undertaken on live animals for scientific or educational purposes.

I have been assured that animals are only used in research when there are no suitable alternatives, and any tests are carried out under controls that keep suffering to a minimum. This is known as the last-resort principle, which will be retained and strengthened in the *Environment Bill*. I am opposed to animal tests where alternative approaches could be used.

Furthermore, I welcomed the introduction of the *Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill* to Parliament. This Bill will not only enshrine recognition of animal sentience in domestic law, but will also establish an expert-led Animal Sentience Committee, which will produce reports on the impact of policy decisions on animal welfare. Furthermore, I am pleased that the new *Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act* has enabled tougher prison sentences for the most serious perpetrators of animal cruelty, from the previous maximum of six months to up to five years - and as a Government Whip, I actively supported my colleague, Chris Loder MP, in getting the Bill into law. The maximum five-year sentence is one of the toughest punishments in Europe, strengthening the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare.



I hope this offers you some reassurance that this Government is deeply committed to maintaining the very highest standards of animal welfare in research.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'T. Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**