

National Physicians Group Honors Michigan Legislators for Working to Protect Animals and Improve Research

Sen. Paul Wojno, Sen. Dayna Polehanki, and Rep. Matt Koleszar Recognized

LANSING, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES, December 9, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine—a national nonprofit with more than 17,000 doctor members—has awarded three Michigan legislators, Sen. Paul Wojno, D-Warren, Sen. Dayna Polehanki, D-Livonia, and Rep. Matt Koleszar, D-Plymouth, with the Legislative Leadership Award for their work to protect animals and improve research in the state.

Sen. Wojno, Sen. Polehanki, and Rep. Koleszar have all worked to end the decades-long use of dogs in painful, deadly heart experiments at Wayne State University in Detroit. Since 1991, hundreds of dogs have been used in the experiments, which have failed to translate to any improvements in the treatment of heart failure or hypertension. Records obtained by the Physicians Committee through the Michigan Freedom of Information Act reveal that university employees regularly perform multiple invasive surgeries on each dog and implant medical devices in the animals' bodies before forcing them to run on treadmills while artificially elevating their heart rates. In many documented cases, dogs have died of collapsed lungs and internal bleeding following the surgeries.

In June, Sen. Wojno introduced Senate Bill 582, which is co-sponsored by four Wayne County senators and would prohibit Wayne State and other publicly funded institutions from conducting painful experiments on dogs. In August, Sen. Polehanki, along with ten other senators and representatives, sent a letter urging Wayne State President M. Roy Wilson, MD, to “finally end these fruitless experiments and instead focus on research that is human-relevant and that benefits the people of Michigan.” In September, Rep. Koleszar introduced a resolution “to encourage Michigan’s public universities to eliminate painful experiments on dogs.”

“In standing up for animals, these legislators are also standing up for the people of Michigan,” said Ryan Merkley, Director of Research Advocacy at the Physicians Committee. “Heart disease is the state’s leading cause of death, and we need research that makes a difference, not cruel experiments.”

The Physicians Committee and state legislators have been pointing to the many nonanimal research methods that are providing human-relevant findings, including a functioning human

heart model created by researchers at Michigan State University. Elsewhere, scientists use diseased hearts from patients undergoing transplants or hearts donated for research to collect data that can translate to human health. The Texas Heart Institute, which is dedicated solely to addressing cardiovascular disease, stopped using dogs in studies in 2015.

To see images of the awards, the letter from legislators, Rep. Koleszar's resolution, or the dogs' veterinary records, please contact Reina Pohl at 202-527-7326 or rpohl@pcrm.org.

Founded in 1985, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine is a nonprofit organization that promotes preventive medicine, conducts clinical research, and encourages higher standards for ethics and effectiveness in research.

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