

Statement of

The Honorable Orrin Hatch

United States Senator
Utah
May 18, 2004

May 18, 2004 Contact: Margarita Tapia, 202/224-5225

Statement of Chairman Orrin G. Hatch

Before the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary

Hearing on

"Animal Rights: Activism v. Criminality"

Good morning. I want to thank everyone for joining us today to examine the issue of when legitimate animal rights activism crosses over into illegal criminal acts. We have some very distinguished panelists with us today and we look forward to hearing from them.

As everyone in this room is well aware, the right to demonstrate, to protest, and to make your voice heard is as deeply imbedded in the American political fabric as is any other right that we collectively hold dear. We cannot and we will not violate that right.

However, where political activism breaches peaceful protest and dives headfirst into criminal conduct, we can, should, and will use every mechanism available to prosecute the individuals responsible. One area where it is abundantly clear that fringe activists have resorted to criminal conduct is where academic and commercial enterprises are conducting legitimate animal testing.

In recent years, some radical activist groups have gone well beyond what any reasonably minded person would consider protest. Their tactics include: vandalizing and pipe bombing research facilities; credit card fraud; threatening employees of businesses and research companies; terrorizing children of employees; and posting death threats against employees as well as employees' names, addresses, and phone numbers on the internet.

These extremists target researchers, farmers, circuses and other lawful, productive, and beneficial organizations. There have been numerous bombings and vandalisms against farmers in my state of Utah. A mink breeders' co-op in Murray, UT, has been attacked and fire-bombed. The farmers' names, addresses, and phone numbers have been posted on the internet, together with complete instructions on how to build bombs, and cover up any trace of the crime. For instance, the instructions on how to make milk jug firebombs came with this caution: "Arson is a big time felony, so wear gloves and old clothes you can throw away throughout the entire process, and be very careful not to leave a single shred of evidence." It is shocking, to say the least.

Additionally, as most of you know, I have long been devoted to health related issues. These actors target what could be life saving research. When research laboratories and university researchers are targeted and attacked, the ones who lose most are those who are living with a disease or who are watching a loved one struggling with a devastating illness. Those who target and attack peaceful organizations and individuals do not legitimately advance their cause, and promise no breakthroughs to society. Instead, they only promote a grave threat to the well being and advancement of mankind.

What is particularly disturbing about these egregious tactics is that they are not isolated instances carried out by a few persons acting alone; instead, they are part of a broad and carefully coordinated effort to threaten, terrorize and ultimately shut down lawful enterprises by systematically targeting their employees, and other persons or entities that do business with those lawful enterprises.

Our task here today is to help identify and show the line that distinguishes lawful expression and protest from criminal behavior.

Again, I appreciate everyone taking the time to be here today. We will hear from two panels of witnesses. On our first will be Mr. McGregor Scott, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of California, and the Deputy Assistant Director for Domestic Terrorism from the FBI, Mr. John Lewis. We look forward to hearing from both of you.

On our second panel includes Mr. William Green, the General Counsel from Chiron Corporation, Mr. Jonathan Blum from Yum! Industries - the parent company of Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Dr. Stuart Zola from Emory University. We look forward to hearing from the three of you as well.

#