

Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act Talking Points

- The Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA), S. 1926 and H.R. 4239, strengthens the Animal Enterprise Protection Act of 1992 (18 USC 43) to address new tactics employed by animal rights extremists over the last 5-10 years.

Why It Is Needed:

- Passage of the AETA is critical to ensure the safety of researchers who work with animals and to help prevent the loss of valuable research.
- The FBI estimates that over \$100 million dollars have been lost to destruction by animal extremist groups, and it has labeled them the top domestic terror threat in the U.S.
- In the past 10 years, the annual number of illegal incidents involving animal rights extremists in the U.S. has dramatically increased over 10-fold, or to over 1000%. Seven incidents were reported in 1995 versus 91 in 2003, and 80 in 2004. There have been 53 incidents as of September 2005. The FBI says that over 1200 incidents have occurred in the past 15 years, with more than 200 of them including arson and bombings.
- Animal extremists have targeted companies and individuals that do business with and own stock in animal enterprises for harassment and violence. These tactics have been very successful in hindering lifesaving medical research and damaging the financial footing of corporations involved in animal enterprise.

What It Does:

- AETA would make it a federal crime to threaten, harass, intimidate, vandalize, trespass, or cause property damage to individuals (or their immediate family members) if these activities are intended to place a person in fear of death or serious bodily injury.
- To address a relatively new tactic employed by animal rights extremists – third-party, tertiary targeting – the AETA would make it a federal crime to cause economic disruption to an animal enterprise or those who do business with animal enterprises. Activities that constitute economic disruption are defined in the bill to properly distinguish prohibited vs. lawful economic disruption.
- AETA increases penalties for economic damage by lengthening the potential prison term from 6 months to one year.
- AETA adds penalties for “significant economic damage” or “economic disruption.” Fines and prison terms of up to five years are authorized.
- AETA increases the fines and prison term (up to 10 years) for “major economic damage” (including “economic disruption”).
- AETA adds penalties for “significant bodily injury or threats” (up to five years).
- AETA more accurately represents the broad animal industry. It broadens the definition of animal enterprise to include animal shelters, pet stores, breeders, and furriers. Businesses that sell animal products for profit are also included under the expanded definition.
- AETA gives law enforcement better tools in order to possibly prevent crimes and/or gather evidence to prosecute animal rights extremists.
- AETA allows victims to seek restitution for economic disruption. For example, researchers may recover the cost of repeating an experiment that was interrupted or deemed invalid as a result of the animal rights extremists’ actions.