

Eliminating Oklahoma's Mandatory Pound Seizure Law

IS 2026-72, Senator Nikki Nice

Oklahoma Senate, Local and County Government

Senator Warren Hamilton, Chair

Senator George Burns, Vice-Chair

Wednesday, September 9, 2026

Organized by:



What is Pound Seizure?



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Beagle Freedom Project video “Nutmeg”

<https://youtu.be/lbiHjN4CAGs>

Pound seizure in Oklahoma and across the U.S.

Cynthia Armstrong

Oklahoma Senior State Director, Humane World for Animals



Formerly called the Humane Society
of the United States and
Humane Society International

Agenda

- What is pound seizure?
- Key dates
- Pound seizure nationally
- Pound seizure in Oklahoma
- Issues with the practice
- Where do we go from here?



Pound seizure

- Pound seizure is the practice of laboratories obtaining dogs and cats from animal shelters for use in research, testing, and education, which can involve painful or long-term experiments.
- Some laws require or allow publicly funded animal shelters (historically called pounds) to release or sell animals to individuals or institutions that would use them in experimentation. There are also state laws that prohibit these actions.

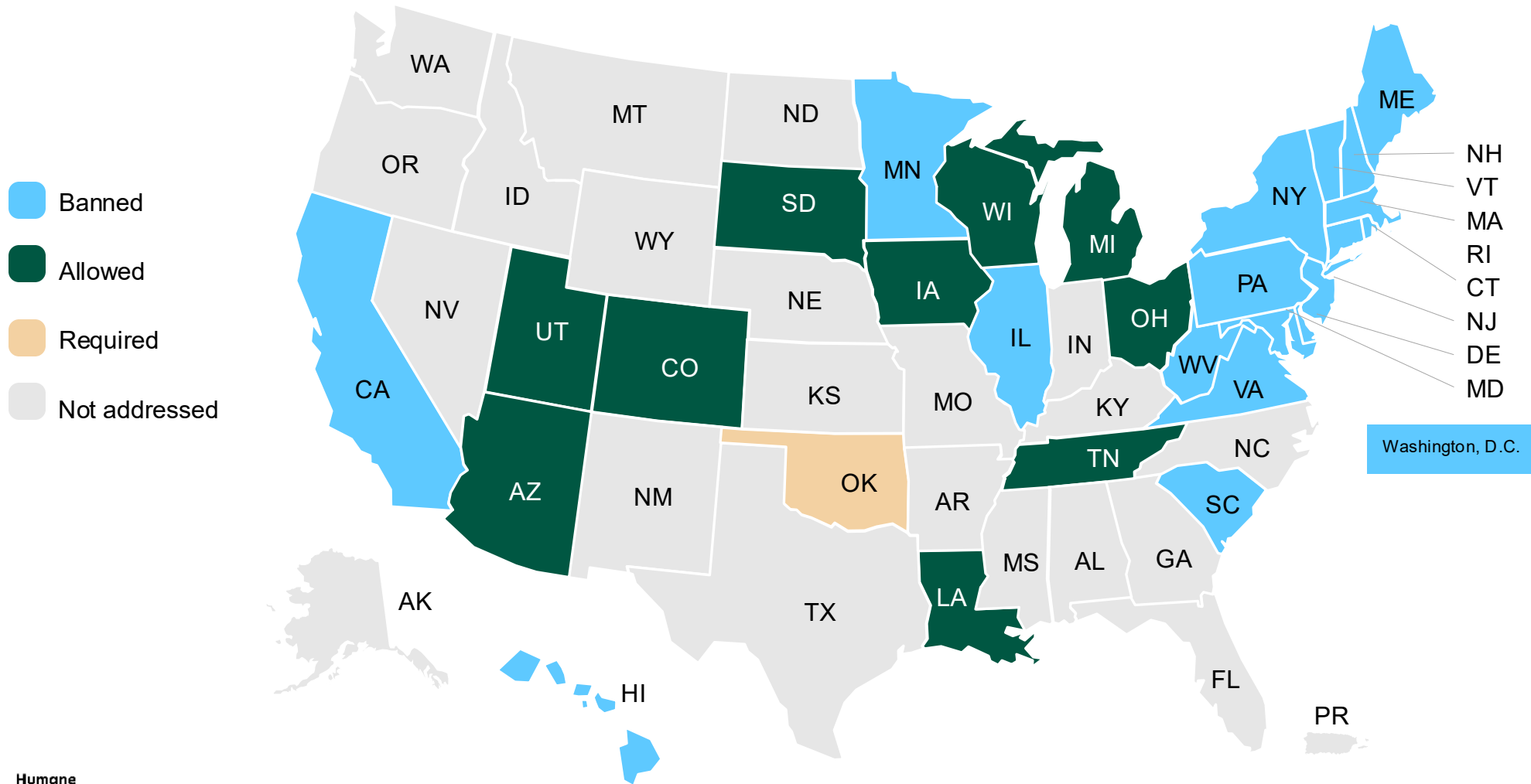
Key dates

- 2009: A study by the National Academies of Sciences concluded cats and dogs acquired from Class B dealers (those that acquire animals from random sources, such as shelters, as opposed to Class A breeders that purpose-breed for research) not necessary for National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded research.
- 2012: NIH no longer allowed the use of grant funds (beginning fiscal year 2013) to purchase cats from Class B dealers for NIH-supported research.
- 2014: NIH no longer allowed the use of grant funds (beginning fiscal year 2015) to purchase dogs from Class B dealers for NIH-supported research.
- Since 2016: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has not been allowed to use funds to license random-source Class B dealers since 2016.
- 2023: USDA was permanently prevented from issuing licenses to this type of dealer.

Pound seizure in the US

- Eighteen states (California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the District of Columbia have laws that ban pound seizure.
- Laws in other states may allow pound seizure, but do not require it. Ordinances in these states may still ban the practice in certain localities.
- Some states have no law on the matter at all.

State pound seizure laws



Pound seizure in Oklahoma

- Pound seizure is mandated (4 Okl. St. Ann. § 391 – 402) in Oklahoma, meaning that if a research facility requests dogs and cats from a municipal shelter, the shelter must provide them.
- Oklahoma is the only state in the country with this requirement.
- Dogs must be held for at least 15 days without a license and 30 days with a license.
- There is no specified holding period for cats.
- The law allows for local ordinances to prohibit the practice in their jurisdictions or set an amount of days for the holding period different from state law.

Why pound seizure is mostly a practice of the past

- Does not align with federal policies
- Violates the public's trust in animal shelters
- Can result in people choosing to abandon animals rather than surrender them to shelters
- Contradicts advancements in science and education

Federal agencies are committed to moving away from animal testing

Multiple announcements to transition to better science have been in 2025 and 2026. Below are just a few examples.

EPA

End mammalian animal testing by 2035

Updated its list of non-animal methods for use by companies and streamlined process for allowing companies to submit new alternative methods for consideration

FDA

Phase out certain animal tests in the next 3-5 years

NIH

New office created to prioritize human-relevant methods

\$150 million investment in non-animal technologies

Where do we go from here?

- Oklahoma's pound seizure law should be repealed.
- Implementing a statewide prohibition on pound seizure would best ensure that it will not occur and would bring the state in line with many others that have already done so.
- Practices that actually benefit animals would still be able to continue, such as animals being used in spay and neuter programs at veterinary schools.
- Oklahoma should align itself with other states that have passed similar bans, federal policy and the direction of scientific progress.

For more information, please contact:

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Thank you

Licensing of Institutions to Procure Live Dogs and Cats from Municipal Animal Shelters



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OKLAHOMA
Dept. of Agriculture,
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Pound Seizure and its Effect on Urban Municipal Animal Shelters



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Pound Seizure and its Effect on Rural Municipal Animal Shelters



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A National Perspective Regarding Animal Research and Random-Source Testing

Presented by
Lindsey Soffes, Head of Programs, Rise for Animals

September 2026

Content

- I. Animal Research & Random Sourcing Today

- II. Congress Permanently Closed the Class B Pipeline

- III. Federal Agencies Are Moving Away from Animal Research

- IV. Congress Is Focused on Dogs and Cats

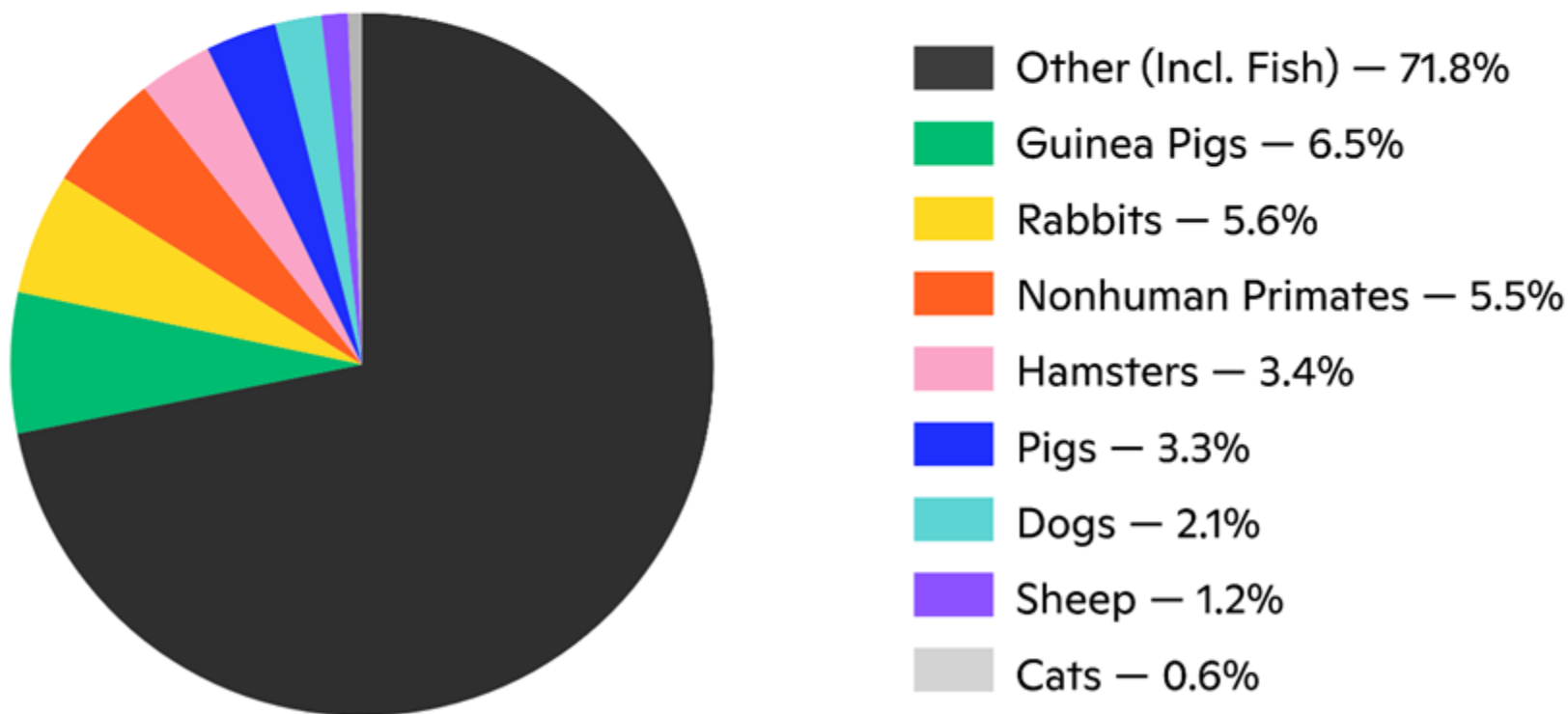
- V. The Shift in Public Opinion

- VI. Modern Science is Based in Human Biology

- VII. Oklahoma Stands Alone

Reported Use of Animals for Research by Species

2025



Class A Dealers

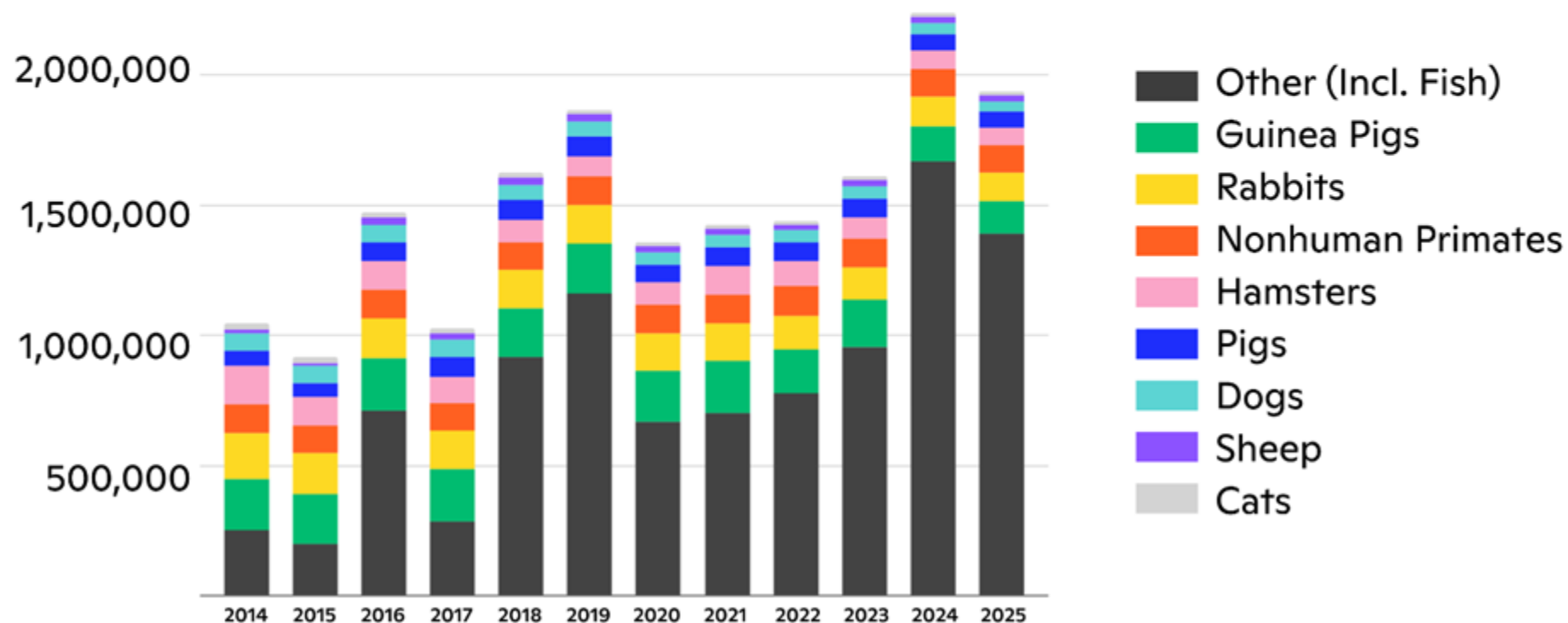
Breed and raise
“purpose-bred” animals
specifically for research

Class B Dealers

Acquire animals from other sources—
such as pounds and shelters—and
resell them to research facilities

Reported Animal Use for Research by Species

2014—2025



Dog and
cat use in
research is
reported to
have fallen
~40%
since 2014.

Buck's Story Helped Change the Federal Conversation



An Oklahoma dog named Buck became a national symbol of the dangers of Class B animal dealing.

Congress Closed the Class B Dog & Cat Pipeline

CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2023

Sec. 733. In this fiscal year and thereafter, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the funds made available by this Act may be used to carry out any activities or incur any expense related to the issuance of licenses under section 3 of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2133), or the renewal of such licenses, to class B dealers who sell Random Source dogs and cats for use in research, experiments, teaching, or testing.

Timeline: The Federal Shift Away from Animal Research

November 2025
CDC announces the phasing out of all in-house nonhuman primate research

2026 → 2035
FDA Modernization Act 3.0 advances with broad bipartisan support
+
EPA commits to eliminating mammalian testing by 2035

December 2022
FDA Modernization Act 2.0 repeals mandated animal testing for new drugs

April 2025
FDA announces plans to replace animal testing requirements for certain drugs
+
NIH launches an initiative to reduce animal use and expand human-based models

Bipartisan Congressional Action Against Dog & Cat Testing

House of Representatives

Defund painful USDA
dog & cat experiments

+

Defund FDA-mandated
dog testing

Fiscal Year 2027 Appropriations

NIH: restrict dog & cat testing

+

EPA: cut dog-testing funds

+

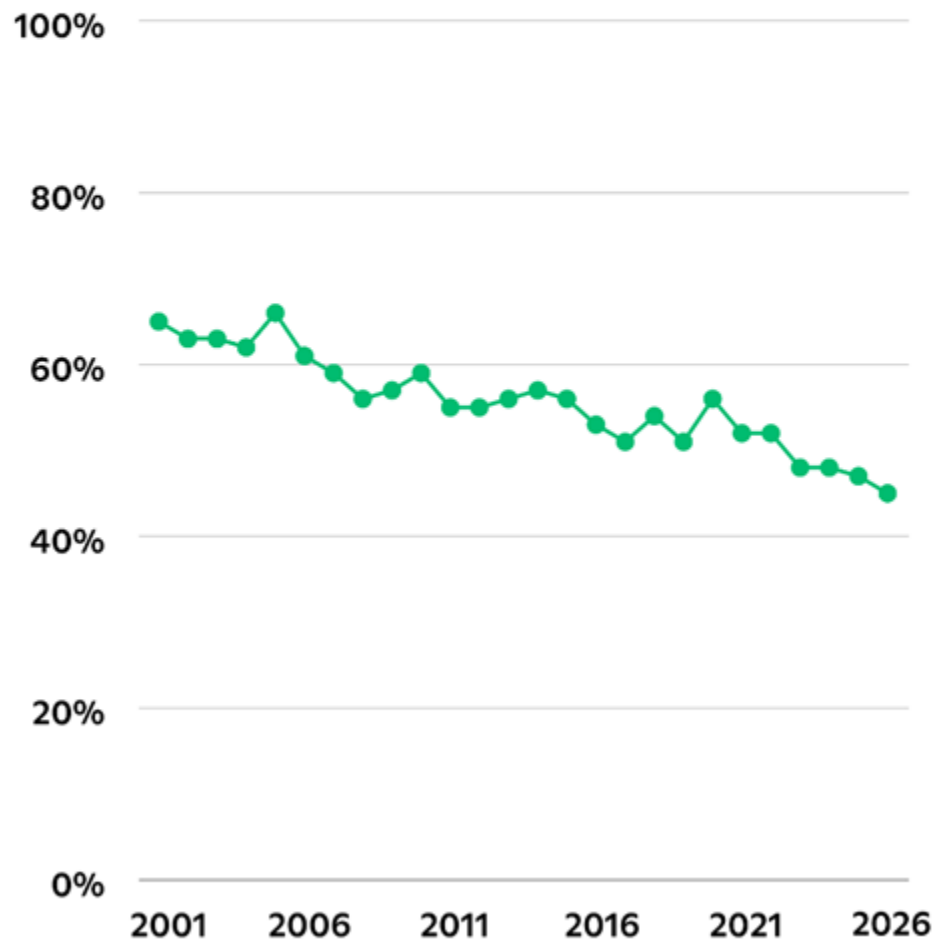
VA: require justification
to Congress

New Legislation

Limit painful NIH
dog & cat research

+

End taxpayer-funded
breeding of dogs for labs



Percentage of Americans Who View Medical Testing on Animals As Morally Acceptable

2021—2026



As of 2026, moral acceptance of medical testing on animals has fallen to just 45%.

Federal Investment in Human-Based Research



Lab-Grown Organoids

Miniature 3D tissues
that are grown
from human cells



Organ-On-a-Chip Technology

Small devices
that mimic how
human organs function



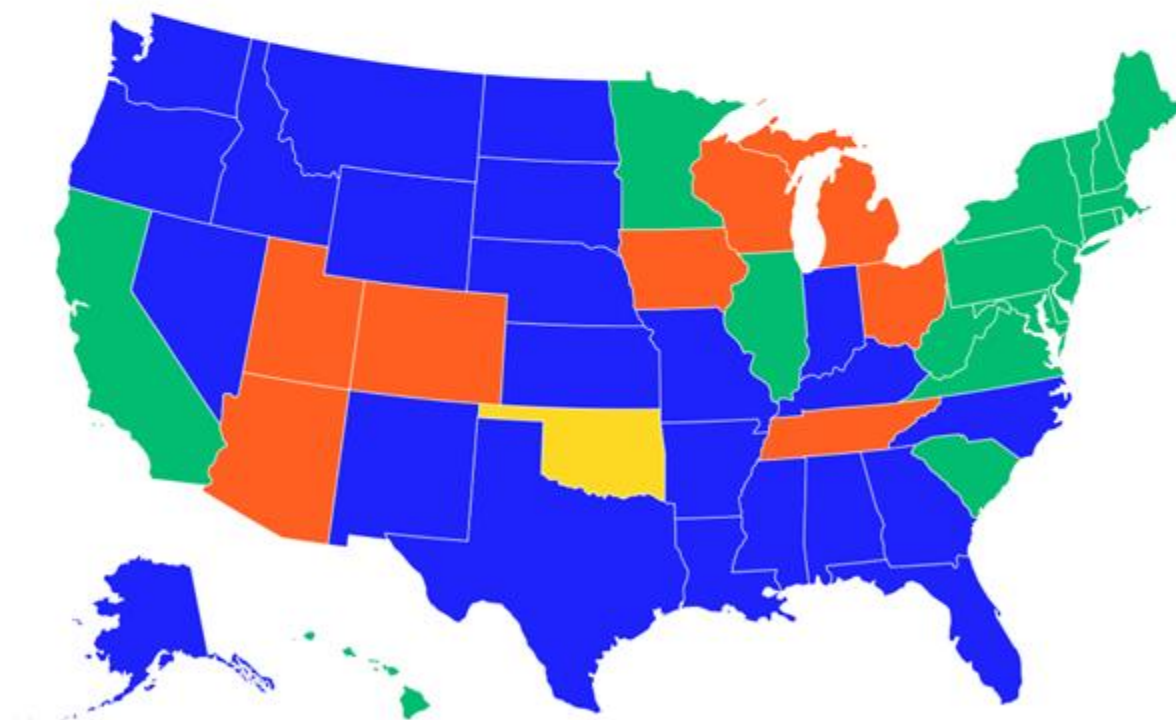
Computational Models

Simulations that
predict human biology
and drug responses

U.S. Pound Seizure Laws

2026

-  Statewide law requires pound seizure
-  Statewide law allows pound seizure
-  No statewide law regarding pound seizure
-  Statewide law prohibits pound seizure



Oklahoma is
the only state
in the nation
requiring
pound seizure.

Oklahoma Law

State law still
mandates pound seizure.

Licensed institutions may
demand unclaimed dogs and
cats from pounds and shelters.

Oklahoma Practice

Zero licenses are known to
have been issued since 2012.

No Oklahoma institution is
known to be using the law.

Where Oklahoma Stands Today



Dog & cat use declining

Where Oklahoma Stands Today



Dog & cat use declining



Class B pipeline closed

Where Oklahoma Stands Today



Dog & cat use declining



Class B pipeline closed



Federal policy shifting

Where Oklahoma Stands Today



Dog & cat use declining



Class B pipeline closed



Federal policy shifting



Oklahoma remains the lone mandate

Thank You

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**Rise for
Animals.**

Solutions to Address Pound Seizure in Oklahoma; Case Study: Freedom Fields



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REPEAL OKLAHOMA'S MANDATORY POUND SEIZURE LAW



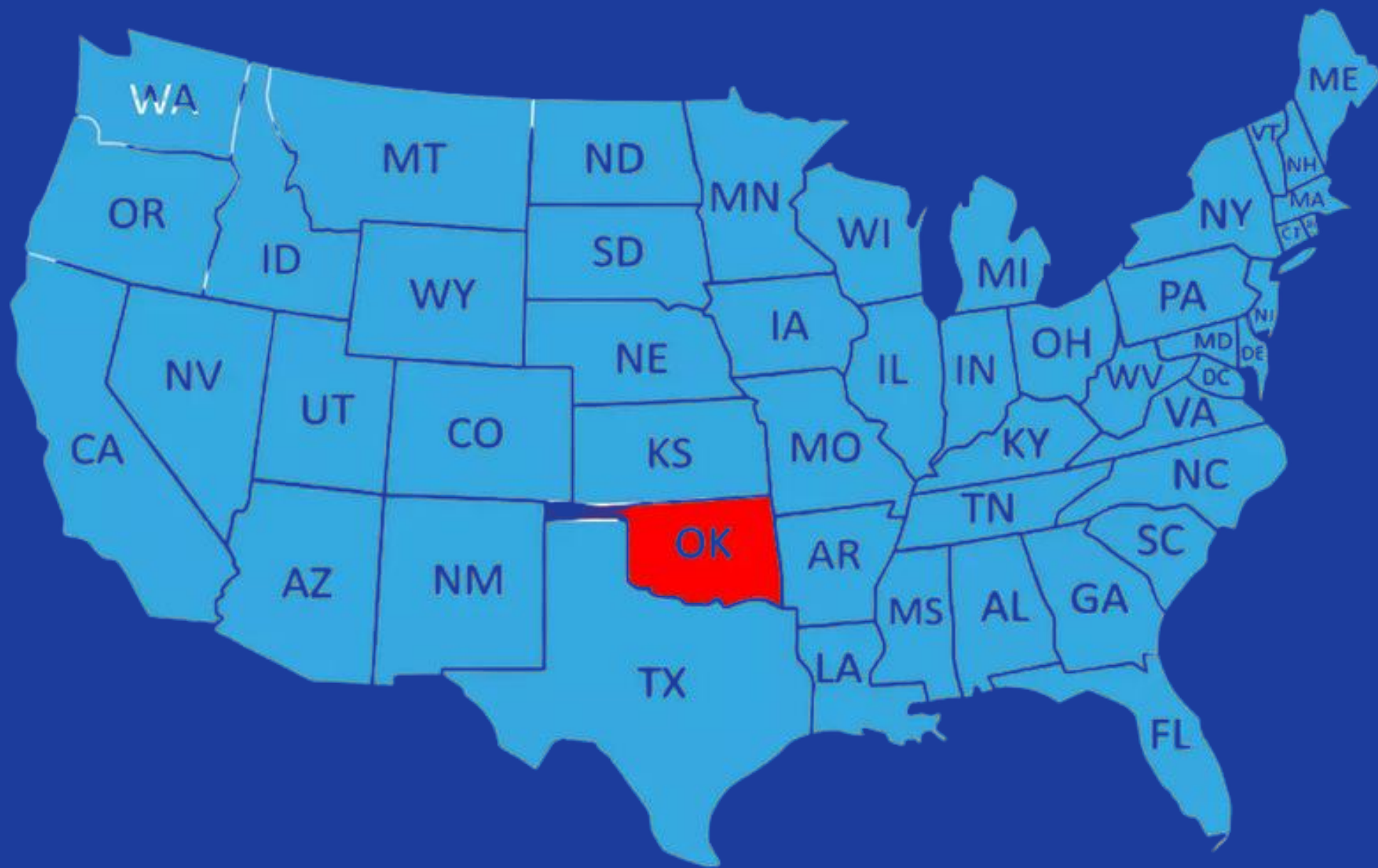
BEAGLE 
FREEDOM PROJECT

THE PROBLEM

Pound Seizure Harms Animals & People

Oklahoma law requires public animal shelters to surrender animals to licensed research facilities upon request — a practice known as mandatory pound seizure. Animals who enter shelters seeking adoption or reunion with their families may instead be transferred to laboratories for experimentation.





Oklahoma is
the last state
to mandate
this practice.





Mandatory Transfer

Oklahoma law currently requires shelters to surrender unclaimed animals to licensed research facilities upon request.



No Opt-Out for Shelters

Local shelters and municipal pounds have no legal authority to refuse pound seizure requests, even when adoption placements are available.



Animals at Risk

Animals that could be adopted into loving homes or reunited with their families are instead transferred to research labs, undermining public trust and shelter adoption rates.



Community Impact

Families who surrender pets expecting humane outcomes are misled. Communities lose confidence in their local animal shelters and adoption programs.

ANIMAL TESTING

Animals in research facilities rarely make it out alive.

Dogs and cats are routinely used in cardiovascular and toxicology testing that result in death.





ANIMAL TESTING IN OKLAHOMA

DOGS & CATS

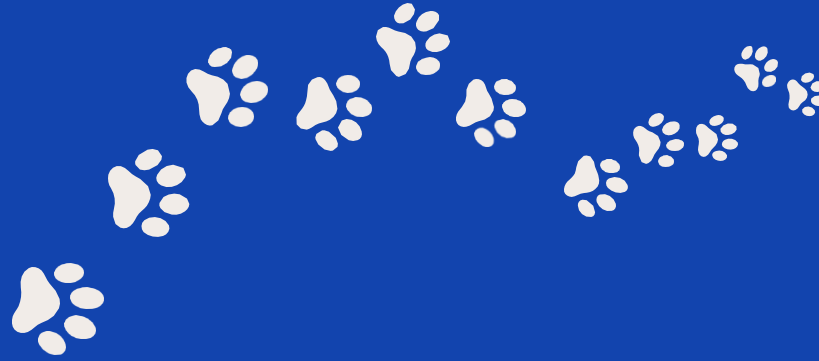
There are four reported facilities that use dogs and cats in Oklahoma.

Of those facilities, the last annual reports stated there were

365 dogs and 106 cats being used.

One of them received a non-compliance inspection report in 2024 for ***not administering appropriate pain medication to dogs during painful procedures.***

OUR RESEARCH



MUNICIPAL SHELTERS

39 MUNICIPAL SHELTERS

**ACROSS 27 COUNTIES IN
OKLAHOMA WERE CONTACTED.**

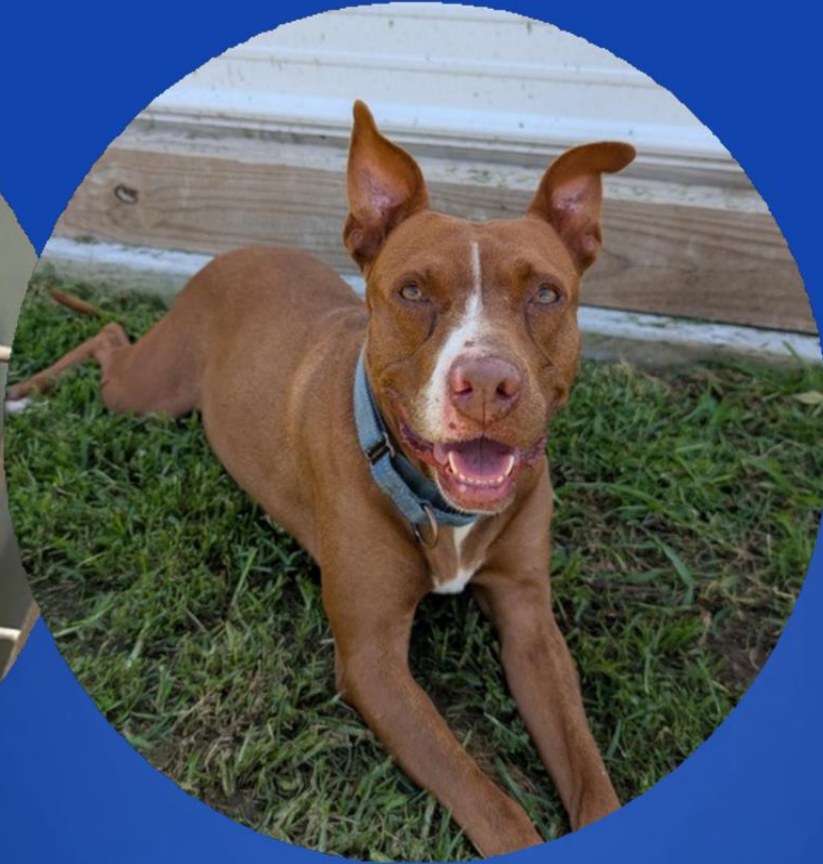
PARTICIPATE IN POUND SEIZURE?

**OF ALL 39 SHELTERS, NONE OF THEM
PARTICIPATE IN POUND SEIZURE.**

**EVIDENCE BASED ON PUBLIC
RECORDS REQUEST RESPONSES.**

SHELTER WORKERS WANT TO HELP AND PROTECT ANIMALS IN THEIR CARE





Pound Seizure survivor, Grace before rescue and NOW, at Freedom Fields in Nowata, Oklahoma.

REACTIONS

Of the the 39 municipal shelters we spoke with, most were not even aware of this statute and when we explained what it was these were some of the responses:

“That is horrible.”

“We would never do that.”

A BETTER WAY

PROTECT SHELTER
ANIMALS.

END POUND SEIZURE.

JOIN THE OTHER 18
STATES THAT HAVE
BANNED IT.



Proposed: End pound seizure by
repealing Oklahoma Statute
Title 4, §§ 391–402 in its
entirety.

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<https://youtu.be/-ro8sFMHR2w>



**Questions? Feedback?
Need more information?**

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