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Sen. Booker Requests HHS Investigation of Award to UW National Primate Center

Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., has asked HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra to investigate the oversight and approval of an award to the University of Washington (UW) for its Washington National Primate Research Center in Seattle and a breeding center for macaques in a desert area north of Mesa, Arizona. “This grant was renewed despite documentation of multiple unresolved, serious issues, including failure to maintain biosecurity—which threatens not only public safety but has also compromised the health of the monkeys and data from studies using them—repeated animal welfare violations, financial issues with taxpayer funds, and failure to comply with both state and federal laws,” Sen. Booker wrote in the recent letter.

The *Arizona Republic* “exposed” five significant issues, Sen. Booker said. These include the prevalence of diseases among the monkeys; violations of state importation laws related to failure to report such diseases; violations of the Animal Welfare Act regarding “adequate veterinary care, unsafe caging resulting in multiple escapes, veterinary error leading to deaths”; and financial and personnel “disarray.” According to the *Republic*, UW receives approximately \$13 million in annual NIH funding. Booker asked Becerra to answer eight questions relevant to oversight of the program, including how it coordinates with the state officials and the U.S. Department of Agriculture and how the award was made, including whether “grant officers” were aware of the concerns.

[Link to Booker’s letter](#)

[Link to Arizona Republic articles](#)

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