

HUMANE ACTIVIST

MARCH / APRIL 2017

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The Humane Society Legislative Fund is a social welfare organization incorporated under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code and formed in 2004 as a separate lobbying affiliate of The Humane Society of the United States. HSLF works to pass animal protection laws at the state and federal levels, to educate the public about animal protection issues, and to support humane candidates for office. On the web at hslf.org.

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Humane Activist (ISSN 1524-5233) is published five times a year by the Humane Society Legislative Fund. To subscribe to *Humane Activist* and to receive our annual *Humane Scorecard*, send a donation of \$10 or more to the Humane Society Legislative Fund at 1255 23rd St., NW, Suite 450, Washington, D.C. 20037, or contact us at 202-676-2314 or humaneactivist@hslf.org.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER //



Dear Friends,

The original federal law to curb some aspects of animal fighting (adopted in 1976) did not prompt a single prosecution for more than a quarter century, even though dogfighting and cockfighting continued to occur in thousands of dark corners—and even some brightly lit arenas—every year in the U.S. That's why HSLF went to work to strengthen the law and make it more viable and effective.

We've upgraded the federal law four times in the last 15 years, the latest change in 2014. I'm pleased to report that the new, stronger framework is making a difference.

Last month, a Virginia man was sentenced to two years in prison for taking a minor to a cockfight in Kentucky. This is a direct result of the passage of the Animal Fighting Spectator Prohibition Act, which was strongly backed by The HSUS and HSLF and included as a provision in the 2014 Farm Bill. The law made it a federal crime to attend a dogfight or cockfight, and a federal felony to bring a child to one. In prior years, we also convinced Congress to outlaw the sale of fighting birds, upgrade animal fighting to a felony offense and ban the possession of fighting animals.

This case marks the first time anyone has been prosecuted under the federal statute for bringing a child to a cockfight. The man sentenced for his role in cockfighting at the Big Blue Sportsmen's Club in McDowell, Kentucky, also pleaded guilty to distribution of hydrocodone. Animal fighting goes hand in hand with other crimes, and the adults who bring children to these spectacles expose them to drugs, violence and other unsavory activities.

Research shows that regular exposure to animal cruelty can desensitize children to pain and suffering. Not only are they at risk of becoming animal fighters themselves, they are also at risk of becoming involved in crimes against people.

With the FBI now tracking animal cruelty crimes in its Uniform Crime Reporting database, and organizations like the National Sheriffs' Association speaking out forcefully against animal cruelty, we should see more enforcement of all animal fighting laws. The HSUS is also training thousands of law enforcement agents across the country on how to enforce laws against cockfighting and dogfighting.

Less than 20 years ago, cockfighting was still legal in five states. The HSUS and HSLF worked to abolish legal animal fighting in each of those states and to close the loopholes in other states' laws. And because many fighting operations are multi-state and multi-jurisdictional, we worked with our allies in Congress to fortify the federal statute as a complement to the state laws. We are now seeing the results of all that work pay off for animals and communities around the country, and we are grateful to all the lawmakers who advocated for tougher laws to crack down on the scourge of animal fighting.

Sincerely,

Michael Markarian
President

Humane Society Legislative Fund



Much to celebrate

BIG WINS ON KEY BALLOT MEASURES

WHEN VOTERS WENT to the polls in November, it wasn't only to choose which elected officials would represent them. In a number of states, voters cast their ballots on measures related to the humane treatment of animals.

A clean sweep of ballot measure campaigns in Massachusetts, Oklahoma and Oregon was evidence that voters—in red and blue states alike—overwhelmingly support stronger animal welfare laws.

HSLF, The HSUS and our coalition partners invested heavily in this trio of state ballot measures—and won them all. In a landslide vote of 78 to 22 percent, Massachusetts voters approved a ban on extreme confinement of farm animals and the sale of products from animals raised in these cruel conditions.

"We had confidence that humane voters would turn out," says HSUS Massachusetts state director Stephanie Harris. "People care about animals."

In Oregon, 70 percent of voters approved a ban on trade in ivory, rhino horn and other products from endangered animals. And in Oklahoma, more than 60 percent of voters defeated the deceptively titled "right to farm" measure that would have blocked even the mildest legislation regulating agriculture (see page 6 for the full story).

"Our strong success on ballot measure campaigns illustrates that no matter what the challenges are with representative government," says HSLF president Michael Markarian, "when we bring animal is-

sués directly to the people, most of the time they side with animal protection, and voters strongly support commonsense animal welfare reforms."

During the past 25 years, voters have approved more than 30 animal welfare ballot measures, halting cockfighting, the use of steel-jawed leghold traps, captive hunts for exotic animals, confinement of farm animals in cages and crates, bear baiting and more.

The landslide win in Massachusetts marked the fourth consecutive win on farm animal confinement issues since 2002, with each victory taking larger margins than the last. In previous years, voters approved anti-confinement measures in Florida (55 percent), Arizona (62 percent) and California (63.5 percent). This newest win puts more pressure on the pork and egg industries to accelerate the transition to cage-free and crate-free housing systems and complements the policies adopted by many major food retailers.

Oregon's new endangered species law, which complements federal regulations, imposes felony-level fines on anyone caught buying or selling parts or products from whales, sea turtles, elephants, rhinos, lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, sharks, rays and pangolins. By passing the ballot measure, Oregon joined Washington state, California and Hawaii in erecting barriers to the illegal wildlife trade along the West Coast.

"I'm extremely proud that Oregonians have done their part to stop the global poaching crisis," said Scott Beckstead, senior Oregon state director for The HSUS. "Oregon has a long and proud history of supporting wildlife conservation. With this sweeping victory, Oregon has set an important example for the rest of the nation."

WITH A NEW CONGRESS AND A NEW PRESIDENT, we can expect to face new challenges, but the advances made in 2016 remind us that animal protection reflects shared American values and transcends partisan politics.

At HSLF, we stand ready to work with lawmakers across the politi-

cal spectrum to advance a commonsense animal welfare agenda, and at the same time, to fight policies that threaten animals.

For the latest information about all animal protection bills, visit legislation.hslf.org.

Bills introduced in 115th Congress

At press time, these are some key bills that have been introduced in the 115th Congress:



Safeguard American Food Exports (SAFE) Act

H.R. 113

To ban domestic horse slaughter, stop the export of horses for slaughter abroad, and prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the U.S. Sponsors: Reps. Buchanan, R-Fla.; Schakowsky, D-Ill.; Royce, R-Calif.; Lujan Grisham, D-N.M.



Pet and Women Safety (PAWS) Act

H.R. 909/S. 322

To expand federal domestic violence protections to include safeguards for the pets of abuse victims on a national level and to provide grant money for domestic violence shelters to better accommodate families with pets. Sponsors: Sens. Peters, D-Mich.; Heller, R-Nev. / Reps. Clark, D-Mass.; Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla.; Nolan, D-Minn.; Denham, R-Calif.; Cohen, D-Tenn.; Walters, R-Calif.

Reintroducing priority bills

We saw a lot of support for several important bills in 2016, which we'll seek to get reintroduced as soon as possible. They include:



Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act

To amend and strengthen the federal animal crush video law enacted in 2010 by prohibiting those extreme acts (animals being crushed, burned, drowned, suffocated, impaled or subjected to other heinous abuse) when they occur on federal property or in interstate commerce, regardless of whether an obscene video was produced.



Humane Cosmetics Act

To phase out the testing of cosmetics on live animals and the sale of animal-tested cosmetics in the United States. More than 1.7 billion consumers live in countries that have already undertaken such action, including the European Union and India. There are many alternative methods—faster to perform and less costly to industry than expensive animal testing—to ensure that products are safe for human use, and 195 companies including Paul Mitchell, Coty, Lush and The Body Shop support this legislation.



Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act

To amend the 1970 Horse Protection Act to more effectively rein in the use of caustic chemicals, chains, weights, sharp objects, cutting and other gruesome techniques to inflict pain on the hooves and legs of certain breeds to achieve an exaggerated high-stepping, pain-based gait. The bill incorporates reforms recommended by the USDA's inspector general in 2010, and by a broad cross-section of horse industry and veterinary groups, to end the failed industry self-policing scheme, ban devices associated with soring, strengthen penalties and hold accountable all who participate in the abuse.

A common cause

BIPARTISAN CAUCUS HIGHLIGHTS ANIMAL WELFARE

ANIMAL PROTECTION is one issue where many Democratic and Republican members of Congress may find common ground this session.

“Our treatment of animals is intrinsic to our treatment of each other,” says Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore. “There should be zero tolerance for animal abuse or cruelty in our society. Fortunately, one’s political beliefs are independent from one’s love of animals and our moral obligations to our fellow creatures. Despite a dysfunctional political environment, animal welfare remains a unifying issue on Capitol Hill.”

Leading efforts around this shared interest will be the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus (CAPC), which “provides invaluable leadership on animal protection issues of great importance to all Americans,” explains Sara Amundson, executive director of HSLF.

Formed in 2009, the CAPC hosts nonpartisan forums and briefings, where members highlight issues facing wildlife and domesticated animals, as well as upcoming animal welfare bills. “It’s a very important tool to ensure that new members of Congress and returning members keep animal protection issues on their radar,” says Tracie Letterman, vice president of federal affairs at HSLF.

Blumenauer co-chairs the bipartisan group with Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla. “Here we have members from different sides of the aisle, different sides of the country,” Letterman points out, “and yet they come together and work really well to promote animal protection issues.”

While new to the role of co-chair, Buchanan is a longtime advocate for animals and was named one of 2015’s Humane Legislators of the Year by HSLF and The HSUS.

“When you consider that half of the world’s wildlife has vanished in the past 40 years, it becomes obvious that we need to take strong action to reverse this trend,” Buchanan says, when asked why he took on the time-intensive role as co-chair of the CAPC. “Promoting the humane treatment of animals and preserving endangered species are bipartisan issues we can all support. It’s incomprehensible to think that some of our most iconic and beloved animals are regularly subjected to cruelty, including horses maimed by trainers to make them high-step for competition shows ... and rabbits subjected to painful experiments in the development of cosmetics. It’s also important to note that the scale and



scope of illegal wildlife trafficking and devastating habitat loss across the globe has put such magnificent creatures as the black rhino and sea lion on the verge of extinction. That’s why animal welfare legislation is so important.”

In the coming session, HSLF will work with members of the CAPC to support legislation to end horse slaughter, crack down on animal torture, help the human and animal victims of domestic violence, end horse soring and advance other key animal protection priorities.

“We are thrilled with the growth of the caucus,” says Amundson, “and look forward to working with its members to support proactive animal protection policies.”



Power to the people

VOTERS REJECT OVERREACHING BALLOT MEASURE

DESPITE ITS BENIGN NAME, Oklahoma’s “right to farm” amendment was intended to protect corporate interests and foreign-owned big agribusiness at the expense of family farmers, land and animals. The measure would have prevented concerned residents from proposing future ballot measures to enact even the most basic protections regarding animal welfare, food safety and pollution—like prohibiting factory farms from dumping animal waste directly into streams.

Political observers bet on Big Ag prevailing. The Oklahoma Farm Bureau, Oklahoma Pork Producers Council and other agriculture commodity groups handily outspent the opposition with a multimillion dollar campaign.

Even so, in this David vs. Goliath battle, David won—with more than 60 percent of voters opposing the amendment.

“Oklahoma voters across rural, urban and suburban areas of the state saw through the measure and rejected this power grab,” says HSLF president Michael Markarian. “The crushing defeat sends a strong signal to corporate agriculture that no industry is above the law or should have special rights.”

The measure was so broadly worded it could have prevented future restrictions on any “agricultural” practice, including puppy mills, horse slaughter and raising game fowl for cockfighting.

Though Joe Maxwell, HSLF political director, spent much of 2016 crisscrossing Oklahoma to drum up support for a “no” vote, he says “it wasn’t just animal advocates” who succeeded in defeating the measure. With help from other members of the coalition (including former state senator Paul Muegge, who serves on The HSUS Oklahoma Agriculture Advisory Council), they “were able to bring the small farmers—like-minded good stewards of their animals—to this fight.”

Maxwell adds that they also reached out to conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts, who understand that manure runoff from confining farm animals in small areas jeopardizes the environment—including lakes and streams.

Former governors Brad Henry, Frank Keating and David Walters, along with four-term Attorney General Drew Edmondson, opposed the measure. Municipal leaders across Oklahoma also urged defeat of the initiative, along with the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes.

Although Donald Trump won all 77 counties in Oklahoma, one of the reddest states in the country, Markarian points out, 37 of those counties sided with animal advocates and family farmers against the so-called “right to farm” amendment.

“We know the majority of people care about how animals are treated, how farmers are treated,” Maxwell says. “The majority of the people are on our side. I think that’s evidenced in this vote.”

HSLF, The HSUS and its coalition partners were successful in banning cockfighting in Oklahoma by ballot initiative more than a decade ago, despite opposition from the Oklahoma Farm Bureau. With this latest victory, animal advocates have won all the ballot measure battles they’ve fought in the Sooner State. Maxwell believes the coalition brought together to fight “right to farm” will continue to work together on future legislation and projects to champion farm animals, farmers and the environment.

“It will carry through to many other issues for us,” he says. “We no longer have to walk alone.”



Endangered Species Act under attack

SOME MEMBERS OF CONGRESS EAGER TO GUT POPULAR LAW

KEY MEMBERS OF THE 115TH CONGRESS

had more than the Affordable Care Act in their sights when seated in January.

Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, hasn't hesitated to express his disdain for one of the country's most popular conservation laws: the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

"I'm not sure if there's a way of actually reforming the Endangered Species Act or if you simply have to start over again," Bishop said in a recent interview with *E&E News*.

A 2015 poll found 90 percent of Americans support the ESA. Even so, some members of Congress have a long history of trying to scale back the law. In the last session, they launched 135 legislative attacks aimed either at specific species or the act itself, according to the Center for Biological Diversity. Back then, though, the ESA often had President Obama to defend it.

When campaigning last year, Donald Trump lamented that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) hides behind the ESA to restrict gas and oil exploration. It seems unlikely that President Trump will suddenly become an ESA champion—but it's possible, and we hope he will see the value of the ESA and what it means for wildlife.

Already, HSLF staffers are working with humane-minded members of Congress to fend off future attacks on the ESA. Animal advocates also need to call their elected officials to share their support for the law, which has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of species under its protection.

"We're really going to need members' help to make sure the act isn't completely gutted," says Keisha Sedlacek, a senior regulatory specialist for HSLF.

Legislation introduced just days into the new congressional session would strip gray wolves of ESA protection in Wyoming and Western Great Lakes states. It's likely that in this new political climate, grizzly bears in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem will also continue to be targeted.

A year ago, the FWS unfortunately announced a proposal to remove grizzly bears in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming from the federal lists of endangered and threatened wildlife. The FWS calls the population, which has rebounded to about 700 bears, "one of America's great conservation successes." Officials had aimed to finalize the rule by the end of 2016, but received strong opposition from scientists, conservationists, American Indian tribes and citizens—including many HSLF members. Now, the agency says it could take another six months to review those comments.

As this issue went to press, the Republican-controlled Senate had not voted on Trump's secretary of the interior nominee, Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Mont., but his confirmation seemed assured. Zinke, according

to Wayne Pacelle, executive vice president of HSLF, "is almost certainly going to face home-state pressure to eliminate federal protections for the bears."

"If the great bears are delisted, the states will take charge of managing them," Pacelle says. "And public officials in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming seem to be champing at the bit to open trophy-hunting seasons on them—for the first time in 40 years."

Pacelle hopes Zinke will look at the results of a recent poll which show that American voters widely oppose delisting grizzly bears, just as they overwhelmingly support the ESA. Removing ESA protections for these animals, Pacelle says, would "ignite a firestorm for a new administration that already has plenty of controversy on its to-do list."





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THE EYES HAVE IT //



➡ **OFFICIALS IN THE CITY OF SEONGNAM, SOUTH KOREA**, announced that they will permanently close the dog meat section of Moran Market, the country's largest dog meat market. It is the biggest blow ever against the South Korea dog meat trade, and with a local government leading the charge, it's a new front in the war against the systematic exploitation of dogs for their meat. Complete removal of the slaughter facilities and dog cages from the market is expected by early May.

➡ In its final major action for animals, the **OBAMA ADMINISTRATION** finalized a rule that clarifies and updates the requirements of the "organic" label, establishing higher welfare standards for farm animals raised under that label. The new rule, issued by the USDA, encompasses an array of housing, husbandry and management standards. In the past, the lack of well-defined requirements has led to inconsistency in how the standards are applied. If upheld by the Trump administration, the rule will make the organic label standards consistent and more closely aligned with consumer expectations on animal welfare.

➡ **UNILEVER**, one of the world's largest food conglomerates, announced that it has fulfilled its pledge to go exclusively cage-free for eggs in all Hellmann's and Best Foods mayonnaise products,

three years ahead of schedule. This move will free more than a million birds a year from cages and is a hopeful indicator that other food companies will fulfill their cage-free pledges ahead of their original time frame.

➡ On the eve of the presidential inauguration, the **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE** announced a new policy to phase out the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle by January 2022 on more than 150 million acres of national wildlife refuges and other agency lands and waterways. The policy is designed to stop the incidental poisoning of millions of wild animals each year by lead that's left behind in the form of spent shot and bullets and lost tackle. An estimated 10 to 20 million birds and other animals—including more than 130 species—die each year from lead poisoning. That's a staggering toll and an entirely preventable one given the availability of safe alternatives to lead products.

