



**Humane World
Action Fund™**

Formerly called
Humane Society Legislative Fund

**CANDIDATE
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Texas state office

2026 Texas state office candidate questionnaire

Candidate Name: _____

Candidate Address: _____

Office Sought: _____ Locality: _____

Staff Contact Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Animals play an important role in the lives of many Americans. Countless citizens look to their local government to protect animals from cruel treatment and exploitation. Humane-minded individuals care deeply about the positions their elected officials take on animal protection issues.

For information on the range and details of our issue areas, please visit the websites of Humane World Action Fund (humaneaction.org) or Humane World for Animals (humaneworld.org).

Background information

What actions have you taken to promote the welfare of animals in the past? (Please include any action taken in an official or unofficial context.)

Are there any animal welfare programs or issues of importance to you that you would take initiative on after you are elected?

Will you post information in your campaign materials stating your positions on animal protection issues?

Do you have, or have you had in the past, any pets that have made an impact on you personally?

STATE ISSUES:

Statewide office holders and members of state legislatures influence animal protection policy by supporting humane legislation, opposing government programs that use taxpayer funds to harm animals, supporting funding for government programs to protect animals and for adequate enforcement of animal welfare laws, and opposing inhumane laws or those which weaken current protections. We'd like to know your position on the following important animal welfare issues, which are subject to debate in your state.

WILDLIFE

Killing Contests: Wildlife killing contests are organized events in which participants compete for prizes to see who can kill the most or the largest animals within a certain time period. Most Americans are shocked to learn that thousands of animals – including coyotes, foxes, bobcats, prairie dogs, rabbits, and squirrels – are killed in these events every year across the United States. Dozens of contests are hosted in Texas each year, including the monthlong Wise County Hog Contest, the Rough Country Big Gray Fox Contest, and The West Texas Big Bobcat Contest, billed as the “highest-paying hunting contest in the country.”

Will you support legislation to address killing contests by making it unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, promote, conduct, or participate in a competitive event at which the participants harass or take covered wildlife?

Yes No Not Sure

Exotic Pets: Despite the risk of zoonotic disease, and threats to public health and safety, it is legal in Texas to own many wild animals as pets. Small primates, for example, may be owned statewide and without restrictions in many jurisdictions. And while already dangerous in and of themselves, primates can also carry pathogens that cause significant human disease—including cases of parasites and herpes transmittable to humans through bites or scratches.

Will you support legislation to prohibit the private ownership of small primates such as macaques, lemurs, capuchins, spider monkeys, owl monkeys, and tamarinds as pets?

Yes No Not Sure

Public Contact: While exciting to see up close, wild animals are altogether unfit for public contact. Substandard wildlife attractions like roadside zoos and cub petting operations exploit these animals to turn a quick profit, often with such neglect that horror stories have been recorded through undercover investigations. Not only do they suffer cruelly when captured, transported, or placed in close proximity to humans, but the risks they then pose to human health and safety are enormous. Cases of aggression may prove life-threatening, as may a host of zoonotic diseases which have been found in tigers, lions, and snow leopards in captivity, resulting in the U.S. Department of Agriculture issuing a rare advisory to big cat exhibitors to discontinue hands-on encounters with wild cats, in the interests of public safety and animal welfare.

Will you support legislation to prohibit direct public contact with elephants, bears, big cats, and primates?

Yes No Not Sure

Ivory: The United States is among the world's largest markets for illegal wildlife goods, including elephant ivory and rhino horn. The illegal wildlife trade is a lucrative, multi-billion-dollar enterprise, fueling transnational crime and incentivizing the cruel killing of animals for their parts. Legal ivory marketplaces provide an opportunity for illegal ivory to flourish, because of the ease of mixing the two. Enforcement efforts are often hampered by a lack of resources or the difficulty of visually distinguishing illegal ivory from legally acquired ivory.

Will you support legislation to end the sale of ivory in Texas?

Yes No Not Sure

Wildlife Trade: The wildlife trade poses a major threat to wild animals across the globe. It puts a price tag on vulnerable species, leading to unsustainable population declines and causing undue pain and distress to animals killed for their body parts. They are otherwise smuggled long distances for the cruel, unsafe pet market. The illegal wildlife trade is now one of the most lucrative illicit markets in the world and, in Texas, wild animals like tigers and primates are the fourth most illegally trafficked contraband in the state, according to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Will you support legislation to crack down on the illegal wildlife trade?

Yes No Not Sure

Appointments to State Agencies: Texas state agencies are responsible for a wide range of policymaking, with immeasurable effects on the state's animal populations and wildlife habitats. For example, the Texas Animal Health Commission engages in key decision-making over animal health, productivity, and safety from natural disasters, but also over "increasing the marketability of Texas livestock commodities at the state, national and international level." The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department sets protections for endangered species, but also issues a multitude of hunting and fishing licenses. With much to gain, special interests often fill state commission seats—where there should instead be a diverse group of perspectives, representing the broad interests of the public.

Will you encourage the appointment of a diverse range of experts committed to preserving Texas's natural beauty and wildlife, backed by science and not by special interests?

Yes No Not Sure

PETS AND CRUELTY

Puppy Mills: Internet sales, flea markets, face-to-face sales, and many pet stores that sell puppies are getting those dogs from puppy mills. A puppy mill is an inhumane, high-volume commercial dog breeding facility which churns out puppies for profit, ignoring the needs of the pups and their mothers. Dogs from puppy mills are often sick and unsocialized. Pet retailers often falsely assure consumers that the puppies they offer for sale are raised in reputable or humane breeding facilities, when really, they are coming from mass production puppy mills.

Will you support legislation to end the retail sale of puppies sourced from puppy mills in pet stores?

Yes No Not Sure

Licensed Breeder Program: In 2011, the Texas Dog and Cat Breeder Act was enacted, which required the licensure and crucial inspection of high-volume commercial dog and cat breeders in the state. The program survived a possible defunding in 2021, which was first proposed due to several weak-points in the statute—such as the high threshold for licensure in Texas. SB 876 passed in 2023 to revamp the law by addressing such gaps. Now, SB 876 mandates licensing for breeders with 5 or more intact female dogs and cats. This threshold was previously 11 or more intact female dogs and cats, allowing many breeders to operate without oversight. Additionally, the bill does away with a prior requirement which demanded proof of selling 20 or more animals in a calendar year, closing the cash sales loophole that left no paper trail. These changes will address significant accountability shortfalls, but there is more work to be done to ensure the Licensed Breeder Program can work effectively to protect companion animals.

Would you support expanding the scope of the Licensed Breeder Program and strengthening the program's effectiveness, by improving oversight and enforcement mechanisms, increasing penalties for noncompliance, and implementing regular audits of licensed breeders?

Yes No Not Sure

Cat Declawing: Many countries and hundreds of cities in the U.S. have banned cat declawing because the procedure frequently results in pain in the paw, infection, tissue necrosis (tissue death), lameness, and back pain. Removing claws changes the way a cat's foot meets the ground and can cause pain like wearing an uncomfortable pair of shoes. There can also be a regrowth of improperly removed claws, nerve damage, and bone spurs. Further, cat declawing has been associated with drastic changes in a cat's behavior, increasing biting, and other negative behaviors. The Humane World Action Fund opposes declawing except for the rare cases when it is necessary for medical purposes to the feline, such as the removal of cancerous nail bed tumors.

Will you support legislation to prohibit the non-therapeutic surgical declawing of cats?

Yes No Not Sure

Pet-Inclusive Rental Housing: Monthly pet rents, non-refundable pet fees, and a variety of pet deposits are all legal in Texas rental housing, and there is no cap on their amount. Rental agencies also frequently ban or restrict dogs because of their breed, or, more commonly, what is perceived to be their breed. This issue is especially relevant in public housing. Founded on myths and misinformation, breed-based policies and high, non-refundable pet fees and pet rents force dogs away from their families and into shelters, taking up kennel space and resources that could be used for other animals. Recent research suggests that almost 75% of renters with pets have struggled to find affordable, pet-friendly housing, but will go to great lengths to stay with their pets, including renting poorer-quality housing. Altogether, pet ownership can be a mechanism for housing and financial insecurity among renters, as families with pets often feel powerless and discriminated against while seeking a home.

Will you support pet-inclusive rental housing, including efforts to prohibit breed-based policies by public housing authorities in Texas?

Yes No Not Sure

Preemption: It is well documented that nefarious pet stores have been a front for the puppy mill pipeline for decades. As such, it is essential to protect local communities' ability to address these bad actors. In Texas, 10 cities, including Dallas, Austin, Bryan, College Station, El Paso, Euless, Fort Worth, Houston, New Braunfels, Pasadena, San Antonio, The Colony, Sherman, and Waco, have passed humane pet store ordinances in an effort to prevent these cruel and deceptive businesses from operating in their jurisdictions. Individuals who seek to profit off puppies will stop at no cost, even using state level preemption legislation to overturn local ordinances, including puppy mill and pet store reforms. In 2023 alone, multiple preemption bills were brought to the floor. The broadest attack on localities' right to legislate on these issues was [HB 2127](#) (2023), a preemption bill that passed both chambers and would have prevented other municipalities from passing humane pet store ordinances if it had not been ruled unconstitutional by a State District judge. However, the fight against preemption is never done. Special interests continue to exhibit a dangerous overreach, coming head-to-head with the core right of local governments to legislate freely on issues impacting their communities.

Will you support municipal governments in their efforts to raise animal welfare standards within their jurisdiction?

Yes No Not Sure

FARM PROTECTION AND FOOD SAFETY

Fashion: Animals need their fur coats more than we do, and whether trapped in the wild or raised on farms, animals used in the fur industry suffer immensely. On fur factory farms in the U.S. and around the world, millions of rabbits, foxes, mink, and other wild animals spend their entire lives in cramped cages, deprived of the ability to engage in natural behaviors — only to be crudely gassed or electrocuted at the end. In the wild, animals are caught in crippling leghold traps without food or water, suffering for days before they die or are killed. Leghold traps are indiscriminate, often maiming and killing non-target animals, like threatened species and even pets—all this in the name of fashion. Prohibiting the sales of new fur products will support efforts to end this cruel industry, while still allowing businesses to sell vintage or used fur products, and continue services caring for fur products, such as storage and cleaning.

Will you support legislation to prohibit the sale of new products containing fur from animals?

Yes No Not Sure

Ag-Gag Bills: In an effort to intimidate and punish the whistleblowers, investigators, and journalists who expose appalling cruelty to animals and workers at factory farms, special interest groups consistently attempt to pass “ag-gag” bills. But they have yet to succeed—the most recent, H.B. 1480, was passed into law, but only after it was amended to remove the language criminalizing employment-based undercover investigations. Ag-gag bills not only serve to cover up issues of animal and human welfare concerns at some agricultural facilities, but are also an unconstitutional limit on our First Amendment right to free speech—and as such, they are met with powerful waves of resistance from civil rights and animal welfare groups, newspaper publications, and organizations dedicated to protecting the civil liberties guaranteed by our Constitution.

Will you oppose these egregious “ag-gag” legislative efforts which would contain factory farm conditions in secret?

Yes No Not Sure

RESEARCH, TESTING, AND FASHION

Retirement: It is a bleak life for the tens of thousands of dogs and cats used in testing and research in U.S. laboratories each year. These animals spend almost every hour of their short lives behind bars in cold steel cages, never knowing what it is like to play fetch, lie in the sun, or roll over happily for a belly rub. Those who have adopted former research dogs and cats can attest to the resilience and affection of these animals once they are given the chance to flourish in a home environment.

Will you support legislation to require institutions of higher education, and related research facilities, to offer cats and dogs no longer used for educational, research, or scientific purposes to animal rescue organizations for adoption prior to euthanizing the animals?

Yes No Not Sure

Thank you for your time! Please return the completed questionnaire to:

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About us

We fight for political and policy change to tackle the root causes of animal cruelty and suffering.

We work to advance our mission by passing animal protection laws at the state and federal levels, educating the public about animal protection issues and supporting humane candidates for office. Together, we act to end animal cruelty.



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