

HUMANE ACTIVIST

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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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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

After fits and starts over two years of debate, the Farm Bill has finally secured passage by Congress, and was signed into law by President Obama on Feb. 7.

The final bill includes two major wins for animal protection.

First, an HSLF-backed provision makes it a federal crime to attend or bring a child under the age of 16 to an animal fighting event. The provision is based on the Animal Fighting Spectator Prohibition Act (S. 666/H.R. 366), sponsored by Sens. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., Mark Kirk, R-Ill., Maria Cantwell,

D-Wash., and David Vitter, R-La., and Reps. Tom Marino, R-Pa., Jim McGovern, D-Mass., John Campbell, R-Calif., and Jim Moran, D-Va. It was part of the Senate Farm Bill from the beginning thanks to the leadership of Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., and Ranking Member Thad Cochran, R-Miss., and was added to the House bill as an amendment by Rep. McGovern.

Closing the loophole on spectators of barbaric dogfights and cockfights will give law enforcement the additional tools they need to crack down on all involved, including those who finance the activity with admission fees and gambling wagers, provide cover to animal fighters during raids, and expose children to the violence and bloodletting that occurs in the ring.

The Farm Bill also jettisons the dangerous and overreaching “King amendment,” which sought to nullify state laws setting standards for agricultural production, and threatened so many laws on animal welfare—including farm animal confinement, horse slaughter, puppy mills, and shark finning. HSLF and our coalition partners representing sustainable agriculture, consumer, health, fire safety, environment, labor, animal welfare, religious, and other concerns made it a top priority to stop this federal power grab.

We are grateful to the bipartisan set of 23 senators and 169 representatives—led by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., and Reps. Campbell, Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., and Gary Peters, D-Mich.—who wrote to the conference committee opposing the King amendment, and we thank all the conferees—especially Chairwoman Stabenow, and Reps. Schrader, Jeff Denham, R-Calif., and Jim Costa, D-Calif.—who worked hard to keep it out of the final package.

Like any large compromise package, the Farm Bill is far from perfect—it doesn't include important reforms curbing agribusiness subsidies to large-scale factory farms or an amendment to provide better living conditions for laying hens—but it moves the ball forward for animal protection in a very meaningful way. It brings us closer to eradicating animal fighting in the U.S. and drives a stake in the heart of the radical King amendment. Now, it's time to redouble our efforts to urge passage of the Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments (S. 820/H.R. 1731), which would set national standards for the housing of laying hens and phase out barren battery cages, improving the treatment of 285 million hens across the country.

Sincerely,

Michael Markarian
President

Humane Society Legislative Fund



Together, boa constrictors (on the cover) and reticulated pythons (shown here) represent more than two-thirds of all snakes in the U.S. trade.

HALFWAY THERE

TRADE BANS STILL URGENTLY NEEDED FOR FIVE SPECIES OF SNAKES

ON A HIKE IN Costa Rica, wildlife filmmaker Vanessa Serrao glimpsed a slow, train-like movement across the trail. Her camera zoomed in, catching every detail of the brown-spotted, nocturnal boa constrictor: scales gleaming under beams of sunlight, forked tongue flicking, head held up in search of prey or a mate as the snake weaved around plant stalks on the balmy rainforest floor.

In the colder, drier climate of Long Island, the *New York Post* described a different setting for this apex predator: “neatly packed in bins.” The newspaper documented a police raid of dealer Richard Parrinello’s garage collection of 850 snakes last September. All together, they were worth about a half-million dollars on the U.S. pet market.

Four months later, on Jan. 28 of this year, 18 members of Congress signed a letter asking the U.S. Department of the Interior to move quickly on the issue of constrictor snakes in the United States—which, as Parrinello’s bins so tragically illustrate, remains a problem more than a year after the Obama Administra-

tion took initial, but incomplete, action.

Millions of large constricting snakes such as boas, pythons, and anacondas are still sold at reptile shows, at pet stores, and online. “They suffer immensely,” notes Debbie Leahy, HSUS manager of captive wildlife protection. “Most people obtain these snakes on a whim and are not prepared to provide proper and long term care. As a result, the snakes commonly develop deadly illnesses associated with poor husbandry, poor nutrition, and an improper environment. A good number of these snakes are simply turned loose when they are no longer wanted.”

And that presents another major problem: The snakes—invasive species capable of establishing self-sustaining populations—pose major threats to native wildlife in the United States. Studies report massive losses of opossums, raccoons, and bobcats in the Everglades, where Burmese python populations have burgeoned. Boas have become established south of Miami and in Puerto Rico.

As HSLF president Michael Markarian wrote

in an op-ed for the *Tallahassee Democrat*: “The question isn’t *if* these non-native predators are going to colonize other areas of the U.S., but when and where.”

In 2009, the U.S. Geological Survey recommended banning the import and interstate transport of nine species of dangerous large constrictor snakes. In 2012, under pressure from reptile dealers, the Obama Administration prohibited the trade in just four. While the Burmese python was included, the rule left unchecked the trade in 70 percent of imported large constrictor snakes—including boas and reticulated pythons, who represent more than two-thirds of snakes in the U.S. trade.

Now, 18 members of Congress, led by House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., and Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, R-Fla., are asking the Department of the Interior to ban the trade in those remaining five species. “When you consider the danger to humans, the damage to the environment, and the suffering that the snakes themselves endure in the trade, the case for a trade ban for all of these giant snakes is clear-cut,” Markarian wrote recently. “It’s overdue for the Obama Administration to finish the job and ban the trade in the remaining five species ... before it’s too late.”

LEGISLATIVE LINEUP

The following is a sample of HSLF-supported animal protection bills before the U.S. Congress. It's vital that you call, email, or write your legislators to let them know your views on these bills. To find out who your legislators are and how to reach them directly, go to hslf.org/leglookup or call 202-676-2314.

When you call a legislator's office, ask to speak with the staff person handling animal protection issues. Give the bill number (if available) and

the name of the bill or issue. Be polite, brief, and to the point. If you plan to visit Washington, D.C., make an appointment to meet with your legislators or their staff to discuss animal issues. We can help you with background information and may be able to accompany you on your visits.

Please note: Due to security procedures at Capitol Hill, regular mail to members of Congress may be significantly delayed. Telephone calls and emails are the best ways to contact your legislators about pending bills.

PETS AND CRUELTY



Animal Fighting Spectator Prohibition Act

H.R. 366 / S. 666
Related language included in Farm Bills (H.R. 2642 / S. 954)

To establish misdemeanor penalties for knowingly attending an organized animal fight and felony penalties for knowingly bringing a minor to such a fight. Sponsors: Reps. Marino, R-Pa.; McGovern, D-Mass.; Campbell, R-Calif.; Moran, D-Va. / Sens. Blumenthal, D-Conn.; Kirk, R-Ill.; Cantwell, D-Wash.; Vitter, R-La.

Pets on Trains Act

H.R. 2066 / S. 1710

To require Amtrak to propose a pet policy that allows passengers to transport domesticated cats and dogs on certain Amtrak trains. Sponsors: Reps. Denham, R-Calif.; Cohen, D-Tenn. / Sen. Whitehouse, D-R.I.

Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act

H.R. 183

To create a pilot program for veterans to train dogs (including those from shelters) as a form of therapy for post-deployment mental health conditions. The dogs are then given to veterans with disabilities. Sponsor: Rep. Grimm, R-N.Y.

WILDLIFE



Big Cats and Public Safety Protection Act

H.R. 1998 / S. 1381

To amend the Lacey Act to better address the exotic pet trade by limiting the breeding of lions, tigers, and other big cats to accredited zoos, and by preventing unqualified individuals and facilities from possessing these dangerous predators, who suffer from being kept in abusive and unsafe conditions and threaten public safety. Sponsors: Reps. McKeon, R-Calif.; Sanchez, D-Calif. / Sen. Blumenthal, D-Conn.

Captive Primate Safety Act

H.R. 2856 / S. 1463

To amend the Lacey Act by adding nonhuman primates to the list of animals specified in the Captive Wildlife Safety Act who cannot be traded and transported across state lines as pets. Sponsors: Rep. Fitzpatrick, R-Pa. / Sens. Boxer, D-Calif.; Vitter, R-La



End All Shark Finning Resolution

H.Res. 285

To raise awareness of the dangers of shark finning and express the view of Congress that, in order to even the playing field for U.S. fishermen and prevent the overfishing of sharks on a global scale, the U.S. should end the importation of shark fins from foreign fisheries that practice shark finning. Sponsors: Reps. Buchanan, R-Fla.; Huffman, D-Calif.; Grimm, R-N.Y.; Farr, D-Calif.

Transparency for Lethal Control Act

H.R. 2074

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, to submit to Congress, and make available to the public on the Internet, a report on the animals killed under the Wildlife Services program. Sponsor: Rep. Davis, D-Calif.

FARM ANIMALS



Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments
H.R. 1731 / S. 820

To provide for a uniform national standard for the housing and treatment of egg-laying hens, phased in over a period of 15-16 years, which will significantly improve animal welfare and provide a stable future for egg farmers. Sponsors: Reps. Schrader, D-Ore.; Denham, R-Calif.; Farr, D-Calif; Fitzpatrick, R-Pa. / Sen. Feinstein, D-Calif.

Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act / Preventing Antibiotic Resistance Act
H.R. 1150 / S. 1256

To phase out routine nontherapeutic use of antibiotics in farm animals—a common practice to promote growth and compensate for overcrowded, stressful, unsanitary conditions on factory farms—in order to maintain the effectiveness of these medicines for treating sick people and animals. Sponsors: Rep. Slaughter, D-N.Y. / Sen. Feinstein, D-Calif.

ANIMALS IN RESEARCH



Pet Safety and Protection Act
H.R. 2224

To prohibit the use in research of dogs and cats obtained through Class B dealers from random sources such as pet theft and free-to-good-home ads. Sponsor: Rep. Doyle, D-Pa.

EQUINES



Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act of 2013
H.R. 2012 / S. 973

To require an independent anti-doping organization to ensure the integrity and safety of horse races that are the subject of interstate off-track wagers. Sponsors: Reps. Pitts, R-Pa.; Whitfield, R-Ky.; Schakowsky, D-Ill.; Eshoo, D-Calif. / Sen. Udall, D-N.M.

Prevent All Soring Tactics Act
H.R. 1518 / S. 1406

To amend the Horse Protection Act to end the failed industry self-policing system, strengthen penalties, ban the use of devices associated with soring, and make illegal the actual soring of a horse for the purpose of showing or selling the animal. Sponsors: Reps. Whitfield, R-Ky.; Cohen, D-Tenn. / Sens. Ayotte, R-N.H.; Warner, D-Va.

Safeguard American Food Exports Act
H.R. 1094 / S. 541

To protect American horses and the public by prohibiting the transport and export of U.S. horses to slaughter for human consumption. American horses are not raised for food and are routinely given hundreds of drugs over their lifetimes that can be toxic to humans if ingested. Sponsors: Reps. Meehan, R-Pa.; Schakowsky, D-Ill. / Sens. Landrieu, D-La.; Graham, R-S.C.

VETERINARY



Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act
H.R. 1528 / S. 1171

To amend the Controlled Substances Act to allow veterinarians to transport, administer, and dispense controlled substances outside of their registered locations to help ensure that proper care can be provided to patients in rural or remote areas, including pets in disasters, farm animals, and wildlife. Sponsors: Reps. Schrader, D-Ore.; Yoho, R-Fla. / Sens. Moran, R-Kan.; King, I-Maine.



Joey (left) and Anthony DePasquale with puppy mill rescue Franklin.

FAMILY AFFAIR

PENNSYLVANIA BROTHERS ASK GOVERNOR TO CRACK DOWN ON PUPPY MILLS

IT ALL STARTED WITH A FACEBOOK POST. That's how Kate DePasquale first learned about puppy mills.

After researching the issue further, she asked her family in York County, Pa., if they wanted to get involved. "We immediately realized that it was wrong and we wanted to help," recalls her 13-year-old son, Joey.

And thus began a journey that would take him and his 12-year-old brother, Anthony, all the way to the state capitol—with one lucky dog at their side.

The two brothers joined their parents as volunteers with Castaway Critters in Harrisburg, and last March, they started accompanying their parents on rescue missions. "Listen, we have to get up at 4 a.m.," Kate remembers telling her sons. "And the kids were like, 'We're there. Let's do it.'" That day, the family helped transport some of the 30-plus dogs rescued from a puppy mill.



Tilly

While volunteering, Joey and Anthony encountered Franklin, a bichon mix who was saved from one of the state's many inhumane breeding facilities. The person who had agreed to foster Franklin never showed up, so Castaway Critters asked the DePasquales to give it a shot.

Back home, Franklin "would just hide in the corner," Anthony recalls. "It was really upsetting to see. When we held Franklin the first time, he was shaking like crazy." But as time went by, the tenacious pup made slow but steady progress, following family members around the house, then attempting to play. "We kind of fell in love with him," says Anthony. "We couldn't give him up," Joey adds.

The DePasquales eventually opened their doors to more foster dogs, including another puppy mill rescue named Tilly. "Tilly was really bad," remembers Kate. "[She] had a broken jaw; [her] eyes went in two different directions. I mean, my vet actually cried when she saw her."

The boys made it their business to do whatever they could on the puppy mill issue. They attended meetings of rescue groups. At school, they started a club called WOOF (Welfare of Our Friends) that garners support for rescued dogs and awareness about the industry.

Using Tilly as their "poster dog," the boys drafted an online petition calling for an end to Pennsylvania's puppy mills and emailed friends, family, and schoolmates for support. Kate also contacted local and national organizations to help publicize the petition. In no time, Joey and Anthony rocketed past their initial goal of 3,000 signatures. At last count, the total was more than 13,000, with signatures coming in from around the world. "It felt great just to see how many people were supporting us," Joey remembers.

On Dec. 3, the boys, joined by Franklin, presented the signatures and a photo book showcasing puppy mill dogs to Gov. Tom Corbett and urged him to do more to enforce Pennsylvania's dog laws. "I want to do this for my whole life," says Anthony. "Help these dogs."

BORROWED TIME

CONGRESS BLOCKS HORSE SLAUGHTER PLANTS FROM OPENING—FOR NOW

OUTSIDE ROSWELL, N.M., in the quiet farming community of Chaves County, two inspectors with the U.S. Department of Agriculture walked out of Valley Meat Company and past unoccupied horse pens.

Last April, KOB Eyewitness News aired the site visit departure, then took viewers around the plant's interior—past opulent stainless steel equipment and the empty, white-walled processing and cooling rooms, before zooming to a drain on the gray cement slaughter floor. About a year after Congress lifted a four-year ban on the practice, owner Rick De Los Santos claimed it was “officially the first horse slaughter plant in the country.”

Valley Meat's plan to open last summer was postponed to Jan. 1 of this year, following legal action by The HSUS and other animal protection groups. According to KOB News, the plant was fully geared up in December, with 15 employees ready for work, 20 horses from Nevada for slaughter, and contracts to sell meat to Belgium, Russia, and China.

But thanks to a provision in January's omnibus appropriations bill, those horses won't

meet the slaughter floor in Chaves County—at least not for the remaining months of Fiscal Year 2014.

The spending bill reinstated a provision that denies funding for the USDA to perform required inspections of horse slaughter plants—effectively banning the practice in the United States and saving taxpayers \$5 million. Six plants had applied for USDA permits to operate. “Americans do not want to see scarce tax dollars used to oversee a predatory, inhumane enterprise,” HSLF president Michael Markarian wrote on his blog.

USDA reports show that approximately 92 percent of horses going to slaughter are healthy; they can include wild horses, riding horses, carriage horses, race horses, even children's ponies. Often transported in overcrowded trailers for more than 24 hours at a time without food, water, or rest, the animals can be injured or killed in transit. And slaughter methods don't always result in quick, painless deaths: Horses often endure repeated blows to render them unconscious.

Public health has also been a key con-

cern. American horses are not raised for food and can be given hundreds of drugs over their lifetimes that can be toxic to humans if ingested. Last June, New Mexico Attorney General Gary King declared horse meat an adulterated food product that cannot be manufactured, sold, or delivered within the state.

Despite January's good news, the threat of slaughter plants opening in the U.S. still looms. “This is a win for horses, but the fight is not over yet,” says Holly Gann, horse slaughter campaign manager for The HSUS's Equine Protection department. Without legislation banning the practice, the provision defunding USDA inspections must be renewed again next year. That's no guarantee, as the language had been stripped out in 2012.

“In 2012, over 160,000 horses were sent to slaughter abroad in Canada and Mexico,” Gann adds. “We're calling on Congress to pass a permanent ban on domestic horse slaughter and end the export of American horses for slaughter abroad with the Safe-guard American Food Exports Act.”



Rescued horses run at Duchess Sanctuary in Oregon.



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{ THE AYES HAVE IT }



➡ The **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL** announced it will investigate the USDA's Wildlife Services agency this year. The government arm annually kills millions of animals, many on behalf of farmers, private ranchers, and big game hunters. In 2012 alone, the agency killed a reported 3.4 million animals, including coyotes, prairie dogs, and bobcats. "The program wastes tens of millions of tax dollars," HSLF president Michael Markarian wrote recently on his blog, "and an audit could provide recommendations for conducting the work of solving wildlife conflicts in a more humane, effective, and cost-efficient way."

➡ **ROLLING STONE** delivered a hard-hitting exposé on factory farming in December with the on-line feature "In the Belly of the Beast," which described experiences of undercover investigators. "Big Meat," writes Paul Solotaroff, is a "cartel of corporations that have swallowed family farms, moved the animals indoors to prison-style plants ... and bred their livestock to and past exhaustion." Hailing reduced meat consumption and smaller, sustainable farms as the answer, Solotaroff offers this final thought: "We can treat our animals better and heal our bodies in the bargain, or become the last of the planet's finite resources gone hopelessly to seed."

➡ The **OBAMA ADMINISTRATION** will permanently require ships to slow down in designated areas to protect critically endangered North Atlantic right whales, who number fewer than 500 animals. The December announcement comes on the heels of a five-year trial in which seasonal speed restrictions led to a reduction in right whale deaths in the protected areas.

➡ **A LONG AND ILLUSTRIOUS LIST OF MUSICIANS AND BANDS** has cancelled performances at SeaWorld's 2014 Bands, Brew, and BBQ Fest, including Heart, REO Speedwagon, Willie Nelson, Trisha Yearwood, Martina McBride (shown below), Cheap Trick, Barenaked Ladies, and 38 Special. Their protest comes on the heels of *Blackfish*, a heart-wrenching documentary examining the misery of whale capture and captivity. In addition, Joan Jett and Edgar Winter have reportedly asked SeaWorld not to use their music in shows.

