

HUMANE ACTIVIST

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IN THIS ISSUE

Big ag's lobbying slush fund
Legislators call for reform in farmer
checkoff program

Political animals
HSUS district leaders find
strength in numbers

Big cats in **CAPTIVITY**

LAW WOULD PROTECT BIG CATS
AND PROMOTE PUBLIC SAFETY



HUMANE SOCIETY
LEGISLATIVE FUND™

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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,

President Trump's preliminary budget proposes major cuts in federal programs across a wide variety of departments and agencies and reflects the new administration's view that we should increase military spending and decrease spending in other areas. From our lane at HSLF, the burning question is: Why aren't there any cuts in factory farming subsidies, lethal predator control and other giveaways of American tax dollars to coddled special interests?

If the Trump administration was hunting for programs to cut to save tax dollars and balance the budget, these government boondoggles should have been first on the list.

As lawmakers work through the budget process and endeavor to downsize parts of the government, we are urging them to look at areas that are ripe for cuts and savings:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services program is an outdated and inefficient model of lethal predator control, essentially operating as a government subsidy for private ranchers. Wildlife Services wastes millions of dollars each year on killing wolves, mountain lions, bears and other wildlife with cruel methods such as poisoning, aerial gunning and steel-jaw leghold traps.
- The USDA can stop the multimillion-dollar subsidies for big pork and other factory farming interests, and let the free market take the place of government handouts. The government bailouts of factory farms (through purchasing their surplus meat and dairy products—often dumping the worst products on our nation's school lunch program and making it available to Indian reservations) are not only costly, but do nothing to encourage such operations to rein in their production or move away from their cruel and environmentally damaging methods.
- The Bureau of Land Management can save tens of millions of dollars by using immunocontraception to manage wild horse and burro populations in the West instead of taking them off the land and putting them in long-term government holding facilities. The strategy would not only be more humane, it would also help the agency get off the fiscal treadmill of rounding up horses and keeping them on the government dole.
- Federal agencies should focus on research and development of high-tech, nonanimal safety-testing methods. Each year the federal government spends hundreds of millions of tax dollars to assess the safety of chemicals, drugs and even natural plant extracts. Evaluating the cancer-causing potential of a single chemical in a conventional rodent test takes up to 5 years, 800 animals and \$4 million. For the same price and without any use of animals, researchers could test as many as 350 chemicals in less than a week using ultra-fast robot-automated cellular toxicity and gene-expression tests. These sophisticated, animal-free methods are already used by some companies and federal agencies to determine testing needs and priorities, and the passage of the Toxic Substances Control Act last year should accelerate the transition to 21st-century approaches to toxicity testing.

Lawmakers should consider these proposals as part of their larger effort to wrestle with the federal budget. Millions of animals would be spared needless suffering, the U.S. balance sheet would be moved toward the black and we would begin to "drain the swamp" of special interests that have been bilking American taxpayers for far too long.

Sincerely,

Michael Markarian

President

Humane Society Legislative Fund



Allowing private possession of tigers, lions and other big cats poses risks to public safety—and to the welfare of the animals.

two cougars, three bobcats, two lynx, a serval and other wild animals from an Atchison, Kansas, rental property. The animals had been abandoned in their enclosures without access to food or clean water. Big Cat Rescue brought several of the animals to Florida, including a bobcat couple named Lovey and Thurston, who were living in a cramped 5-by-13-foot enclosure with only a small plastic doghouse as shelter.

“When individuals foolishly acquire big cats as pets or exploit them in entertainment businesses, the cats often suffer in deplorable conditions,” says Carole.

The Big Cat Public Safety Act was first introduced in 2012, but Howard feels optimistic that this could be the year that the legislation makes it to the floor for a vote. “We have never been more excited about the prospects for the bill than we are in 2017 because the bill was never introduced this early in the session before, never started out with such a strong base of co-sponsors from the prior session and never had a member of the Natural Resources Committee as the sponsor,” he says. “We feel the stars are aligning to pass the bill this year.”

HSLF president Michael Markarian points to the hundreds of dangerous incidents in the United States involving tigers, lions and cougars, including human injuries, maulings and deaths. “Enactment of this legislation cannot come soon enough,” he says, adding that the legislation will “address the national crisis of big cats in captivity and stem the tide of problems created by reckless individuals owning and breeding tigers, lions and other big cats and putting the rest of society at risk.”

Cruel confinement

BIPARTISAN BILL WOULD PROHIBIT PRIVATE POSSESSION AND BREEDING OF DANGEROUS BIG CATS

CAROLE AND HOWARD BASKIN dream of a world where their Big Cat Rescue doesn't need to exist. “We spend so much time and energy on trying to put ourselves out of business,” says Carole, the nonprofit's founder and CEO.

The passage of the Big Cat Public Safety Act (H.R. 1818), the couple believes, will help ensure there won't be future generations of animals in need of their Tampa, Florida, sanctuary, which houses abused and abandoned lions, leopards, tigers, cougars and other big cats. “That bill would take care of 98 percent of the problem,” says Carole. “Relying on accredited sanctuaries to take in unwanted and usually neglected big cats is not a viable solution.”

Introduced in March by U.S. Reps. Jeff Denham, R-Calif., Walter Jones, R-N.C., and Niki Tsongas, D-Mass., this bipartisan bill strengthens the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, the existing

federal law passed unanimously in 2003, by closing loopholes that allow private possession and breeding of big cats. “The act would prohibit individual possession and breeding of big cats in the nation's roadside zoos, backyards and basements,” explains Tracie Letterman, vice president of federal affairs for HSLF.

The bill provides reasonable exemptions for wildlife sanctuaries and exhibitors licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that meet basic standards of humane care and treatment. Existing owners who do not qualify for an exemption may keep the big cats they currently possess—so long as they notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Big cats kept by individuals as pets often live in abusive and unsafe conditions. The Big Cat Public Safety Act could have prevented the 2013 case where authorities seized a tiger,



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 federal 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 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 on 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.

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

Equines



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.

Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act

H.R. 1847

To amend the Horse Protection Act to end the failed system of industry self-policing, ban the use of devices associated with soring, strengthen penalties and make illegal the actual soring of a horse for the purpose of showing or selling the animal. Sponsors: Reps. Yoho, R-Fla.; Schrader, D-Ore.; Marino, R-Pa.; Cohen, D-Tenn.; Collins, R-N.Y.; Schakowsky, D-Ill.

Pets and Cruelty



Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act

H.R. 1494 / S. 654

To strengthen the animal crush video law by prohibiting those same extreme acts of animal cruelty, such as deliberately crushing, burning, drowning, impaling and suffocating, when they occur in interstate or foreign commerce, regardless of whether or not a video was produced. Sponsors: Reps. Smith, R-Texas; Deutch, D-Fla. / Sens. Toomey, R-Pa.; Blumenthal, D-Conn.

Help Extract Animals from Red Tape (HEART) Act

H.R. 398

To expedite the rehabilitation and adoption process for abused animals seized by the government, such as during animal fighting raids, and require their owners (rather than local animal shelters) to cover their care costs. Sponsors: Reps. Katko, R-N.Y.; Chu, D-Calif.

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: Reps. Clark, D-Mass.; Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla.; Nolan, D-Minn.; Denham, R-Calif.; Cohen, D-Tenn.; Walters, R-Calif. / Sens. Peters, D-Mich.; Heller, R-Nev.



Yulin Dog Meat Festival Resolution

H. Res. 30

To condemn the "Dog Meat Festival" in Yulin, China, and urge China to end its dog meat trade that slaughters more than 10 million dogs annually (including many stolen pets.) Sponsor: Rep. Hastings, D-Fla.

Dog and Cat Meat Prohibition Act

H.R. 1406

To amend the federal Animal Welfare Act to prohibit the slaughter and trade of dogs and cats for human consumption and provide penalties for individuals involved in the dog or cat meat trade in the U.S. Sponsors: Reps. Hastings, D-Fla.; Buchanan, R-Fla.; Trott, R-Mich.; Boyle, D-Pa.

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Animal Research



Battlefield Excellence through Superior Training Practices (BEST Practices) Act
H.R. 1243

To require the Department of Defense to complete development, testing and validation of human-based training methods, including simulators, for treatment of combat trauma injuries, with the goal of replacing live animal-based methods that are inhumane and less efficient and instructive. Sponsor: Rep. Johnson, D-Ga.

Federal Accountability in Chemical Testing (FACT) Act
H.R. 816

To amend the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) Authorization Act of 2000 to improve reporting about animal testing and alternative test method use by federal agencies. Sponsor: Rep. Calvert, R-Calif.

Wildlife



Big Cat Public Safety Act
H.R. 1818

To advance animal welfare and protect public safety by prohibiting possession and breeding of tigers, lions, leopards and other big cat species by private individuals and unqualified exhibitors. Sponsors: Reps. Denham, R-Calif.; Walter Jones, R-N.C.; Niki Tsongas, D-Mass.

Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act
H.R. 1438

To ban the use of body-gripping traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Sponsor: Rep. Lowey, D-N.Y.

Farm Animals



Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act
H.R. 1753 / S. 741

To strengthen checkoff program prohibitions against engaging in lobbying, conflicts of interest or anticompetitive activities that harm other commodities or consumers. Sponsors: Reps. Brat, R-Va; Titus, D-Nev. / Sens. Lee, R-Utah; Booker, D-N.J.

Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act (PAMTA)
H.R. 1587

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. Sponsor: Rep. Slaughter, D-N.Y.

Cross-Category



Animal Welfare Accountability and Transparency Act
H.R. 1368 / S. 503

To require the USDA to restore online searchable access to inspection reports and other vital records relating to enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act and to establish an additional deterrent against animal abuse. Sponsors: Rep. Blumenauer, D-Ore. / Sen. Wyden, D-Ore.



Citizen activists

HSUS DISTRICT LEADERS HELP ADVANCE BETTER LAWS NATIONWIDE AND LOCALLY

AT A FEBRUARY chamber of commerce luncheon in Covington, Kentucky, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell answered a few questions submitted by attendees. However, one question from HSUS district leaders Karlyn Schnapp and her husband, Sean Pronay, went unanswered.

Undeterred, the couple lingered after the luncheon ended to get McConnell's views on Senate Joint Resolution 18, which would revoke a rule restricting inhumane and unsporting practices on national wildlife refuges in Alaska. Schnapp and Pronay knew they'd just have seconds with the senator, so when McConnell turned to the pair, they told him about how wolf pups and bear cubs would be slaughtered where they hibernate and argued that eco-tourists spend more money in Alaska than hunters. They asked him not to repeal the rule.

McConnell admitted he knew little about the resolution, but that he would vote the way his fellow Republicans in Alaska asked. That wasn't the answer Schnapp and Pronay wanted, nor was the outcome of the March vote

that passed the resolution. Nevertheless, they view their meeting with McConnell as "a rare opportunity" to advocate for Alaska's wildlife.

The HSUS is working to find committed advocates like Schnapp and Pronay in every congressional district in the country. District leaders are volunteers—Democrats, Republicans and Independents—who advocate for HSUS and HSLF legislative priorities to their elected officials at the local, state and federal levels. They also advance local initiatives such as the Puppy Friendly Pet Store model,



HSUS district leaders, Karlyn Schnapp and her husband Sean Pronay.

promote Meatless Monday in local school districts, and advocate for local ordinances to ban the use of wild animals in circus acts. In the three years since the program's inception, The HSUS has recruited 502 district leaders in 47 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

"The district leaders are the backbone of our federal grassroots program," says Sara Amundson, executive director and senior vice president at HSLF. "Their efforts to build relationships with their members of Congress and staff significantly augment our lobbying capacity for animal protection."

This unique animal welfare volunteer program attracts and retains driven advocates because it gives them a way to amplify their efforts, explains Carol Misseldine, senior director for grassroots outreach and engagement for The HSUS.

"Most district leaders had been working on animal protection issues before they accepted this volunteer position, but would often feel as if their efforts were isolated and lacking leverage," she says. "Now they know they're working in coordination and collaboration with hundreds of other leaders across the country, which provides an unparalleled community and impact."

Nancy Davis, a district leader from Hinckley, Ohio, admits she was far from politically savvy when she took on the district leader role three years ago, but she learned what she needed to know from The HSUS, which offers volunteers an online training course, tips on legislative advocacy and monthly calls where experts highlight current humane legislation and high-impact local initiatives. "They give you great tools to be able to help," Davis says.

Pennsylvania district leader Jessica Carlson adds that she's been involved with animal welfare issues since she was a child, but being a district leader has helped her understand the importance of building relationships with legislators. "It's not that intimidating," she says. "They're there to hear from you."

+ TO APPLY to the district leader program, go to humanesociety.org/districtleader.



Checkoff corruption

MANDATORY USDA PROGRAM RIPE FOR REFORM

IT STARTED OUT SMALL, simple and relatively transparent: In the 1920s, ranchers began paying a nickel for every 25 cows sold—money that was used to promote beef consumption. That voluntary program was called “checkoff” for a box on a bookkeeping form.

Today—having morphed into a huge and mandatory U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program—checkoffs collect an estimated \$200 million each year from beef, pork and egg producers, and a big chunk of the money is funneled to factory farming lobbyists. Congress initially intended the tax on farmers to go toward nonpolitical federal programs to promote their commodities. Instead, vast sums are diverted for the USDA and agribusiness trade groups—including the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) and the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC)—to engage in advocacy or anti-competitive activities that hurt small farmers and block commonsense farm animal welfare reforms.

This year, these agribusiness trade groups face a major challenge with two bills introduced in Congress.

On March 28, U.S. Sens. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Mike Lee, R-Utah, introduced the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act, while Reps. Dave Brat, R-Va., and Dina Titus, D-Nev., introduced a companion bill in the House. The OFF Act (H.R. 1753/S. 741) would strengthen checkoff program prohibitions against government lobbying, conflicts of interest and anticompetitive activities that harm other commodities or consumers.

The beef checkoff program serves as a prime example of how small family farmers get bilked out of millions through the diversion of checkoff dollars. The NCBA receives the majority of national checkoff fees, which make up most of its total budget. That’s almost every beef checkoff dollar, paid by many of the smallest farmers, going to a lobbying group that typically works for the interests of the biggest producers and against the interests of independent operators.

“If I was confident I knew exactly what the money was going toward and it was going to accomplish something good for all farmers, I wouldn’t have a problem with it,” says Pete Eshelman, owner of Joseph Decuis Farm in Roanoke, Indiana, and a member of The HSUS National Agriculture Advisory Council. “But what’s happened with this checkoff thing is that it has gone to a large organization and then they use that to lobby and the interests are generally not the interests of sustainable farming.”

The OFF Act would also require increased transparency on how checkoff funds are spent. The fact that these numbers aren’t readily available serves as a red flag to Eshelman. “I just want to make sure the dollars are being spent honestly,” he says.

Dozens of farm groups and animal welfare organizations back the bills, which fit in with President Trump’s promise to stop waste, fraud and abuse in the federal government.

“For too long, America’s family farmers have been forced to fund programs that undermine their efforts to preserve rural communities and to use traditional methods of farming,” said Joe Maxwell, a Missouri hog farmer and senior political director at HSLF. “Farmers should have guarantees these programs are working for them and shouldn’t have their hard-earned money going toward a slush fund for big ag.”





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THE EYES HAVE IT //



Sen. Cory Booker (center) receives award from HSLF president Michael Markarian (left) and HSLF executive vice president Wayne Pacelle.

➤ At the annual Congressional Humane Awards in April, HSLF and The HSUS named Sens. **CORY BOOKER**, D-N.J., and **DIANNE FEINSTEIN**, D-Calif., and Reps. **ED ROYCE**, R-Calif., and **JOHN SHIMKUS**, R-Ill., the 2016 Humane Legislators of the Year for their significant roles and effectiveness in advancing animal welfare legislation. The awards also recognized a broader bipartisan group of outstanding lawmakers based on their leadership on animal protection issues and their ratings on the 2016 *Humane Scorecard*. In total, 200 legislators—51 in the Senate and 149 in the House (representing 39 states)—were honored for their work in 2016.

➤ **GUATEMALA**, Central America’s most populous nation with more than 15 million people, recently adopted one of the world’s most comprehensive anti-cruelty laws. In addition to basic anti-cruelty provisions, the law includes a ban on animal testing for cosmetics, and it outlaws dogfighting, with penalties for spectators as well as organizers of this cruel activity. The legislation creates an official government platform to address animal welfare and will, for the first time, penalize animal abusers and implement strong protections for wildlife, companion animals, animals used in research and animals used in circuses.

➤ In March, a **FEDERAL APPEALS COURT** upheld a New York City law that bans pet stores from selling dogs from unlicensed breeders or those with serious violations of the Animal Welfare Act. The law strictly forbids pet stores from sourcing dogs from middleman brokers who conceal the dogs’

origins. The federal court rejected claims by breeders and pet stores that the law imposes unlawful burdens on out-of-state business interests. The court also rejected the plaintiffs’ claims that the federal Animal Welfare Act pre-empts local ordinances restricting the trade in animals. The ruling isn’t just a blow against the puppy mill trade; it also has implications for state and local laws that restrict the sale of other animals or animal products derived from cruel or unsafe practices.

➤ **INTERIOR SECRETARY RYAN ZINKE** recently announced a policy making his department the first federal agency to allow dogs in the workplace. The program will be pilot-tested in May and September at Interior’s Washington headquarters. *The Huffington Post* reported that in an email to staff announcing “Doggy Days at Interior,” Zinke wrote, “Scientific studies show having a dog around the office improves morale and productivity ... and has health benefits like reducing stress levels.”

