Special Report: HSUS is a Voice for Animals in Nation's Capital
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Focus on Washington Helps Animals Throughout Nation

Washington, D.C.—Power is the name of the game in Washington, D.C. Powerful voices representing every shade of opinion on nearly every subject are seeking constant attention from our lawmakers and civil servants. The Humane Society of the United States is likewise working and speaking for the millions of Americans who care about animals. HSUS is investigating federal agency animal management programs; testifying on Capitol Hill; providing expert advice to legislative committees and congressmen; taking legal action in federal courts; serving on advisory committees; and monitoring legislative, regulatory, and legal affairs having to do with animals.

The voice of The Humane Society provides the necessary balance our lawmakers require as they consider programs affecting the lives of both domestic and wild animals. Hunters, trappers, ranchers, furriers, animal and food transporters, food producers, animal breeders, researchers, and others who use animals for profit, scientific investigation, or sport, seek government approval, intervention, or no control at all in the animal related activities. More often than not, the voice of the HSUS is contrary to their desires. These special interest groups are well financed and employ highly paid lobbyists to press their point. Though The HSUS does not employ lobbyists, it is a well respected, often sought-after voice in animal affairs. It is rare that legislation or regulations having to do with animals is considered without some input from The HSUS. The HSUS is listed in the congressional guide book as a source to be called upon in matters affecting wildlife; legislation having to do with zoos, circuses, and wildlife; and the transportation of animals, animal shelter operation, spay and neuter clinics, and other domestic animal problems. The HSUS is also listed in The Fish and Wildlife Service Pollution Response Plan as an expert source on oil spill disasters affecting wildlife.

A Voice for Domestic Animals. The “population explosion” of domestic pets is a major focus of HSUS efforts. The sad necessity of euthanizing thousands of unwanted cats and dogs every day, and the public health problems created by wandering, abandoned dogs make population control a matter of concern for all citizens.

HSUS’s Animal Control Specialist Phyllis Wright has spent many years working with local officials improving animal regulation control techniques, and shelter facilities.

Now, she is providing information to interested Senators and Congressmen helping them to develop a federal plan responding to the nation’s massive overpopulation of cats and dogs. This year, a bill is being considered in the House that would lend assistance to local governments seeking to reduce and control domestic pets. The Senate is also seeking input from The HSUS. Wright has worked closely with the legislators developing the laws. She recommends a strong animal control ordinance as a mandatory provision of any law before communities could receive grants for the establishment of spay and neuter clinics.

HSUS’s new Institute for the Study of Animal Problems, headed by Dr. Michael Fox, is working on the pet overpopulation problem too. In addition to its in-depth ongoing studies of pet overpopulation, ISAP through Dr. Fox, is providing testimony before a House subcommittee considering the establishment of a Com-
mission on the Humane Treatment of Animals. If passed by Congress and signed into law, this commission would review animal problems in the U.S. for a period of two years. At the end of this time, they would make legislative recommendations to Congress to help alleviate suffering. The Library of Congress, which serves as the research arm of Congress, has called upon The HSUS research staff to provide data on the overpopulation problem. HSUS is listed with them as a cooperating agency in their reference center. They often contact HSUS for expert advice on animal welfare issues.

The HSUS has had considerable input on the transportation of pets from breeding centers to pet suppliers. HSUS is exerting every effort to see to it that puppy mill operators will have to contend with strict application of the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act. The Investigations Department of The HSUS has conducted several “raids” on puppy mills and assisted The Department of Agriculture inspectors in searching out and prosecuting the breeders who violate the standards of the Animal Welfare Act. For example, the Act does not permit breeding animals that are in “inadequate condition” or “substandard carriers.” Breeding animals to ship pets in flimsy “orange crate” type boxes any longer. Not long ago, HSUS Midwestern Representative Frantz Dantzler, HSUS’s Director of Field Services and Investigations pointed out the “The Department of Agriculture does not have the manpower to create regulations and to enforce them as they should. Animal related laws have been growing at a rapid pace, but as Americans we have seen the need to protect and defend wild and domestic animals. The government has simply not kept pace with this growing concern.” In line with this HSUS has asked the new Carter Administration to provide more resources and manpower on behalf of enforcing laws protecting animals.

John A. Hoyt (left), President of HSUS and Lorne Greene discuss outcome of Idaho wolf case.

The HSUS involvement deals with slaughterhouse techniques, caging, transportation, and care. The HSUS has investigated and testified to the cruel conditions in which veal calves are raised, beef cattle are slaughtered, and chickens and hogs are transported through filthy conditions.

The HSUS led the fight for the Federal Humane Slaughter Act which was passed into law in 1958. The HSUS has also been active in efforts to get the Meat Inspection Act and the poultry laws amended.

As of this writing, the court has allowed Agriculture more time in which to complete the task. The regulations have been published and will now be commented on by the HSUS and other interested parties. HSUS experts are working to strengthen the proposed regulations as much as possible.

According to Sue Pressman, HSUS Director of Wildlife Protection, “My office is a member of a study group for the Department of Interior for Endangered Species. We have the opportunity to make recommendations every time an organization or individual seeks to import or export an animal that is on the Endangered Species List.

Working together, HSUS has contributed to animal welfare agencies in more than 50 countries around the world when they engaged in a “fight to the death” with a karate expert. Armed with a letter of introduction from the Department of Interior and a copy of the International Treaty on Rare and Endangered Tigers and Fauna (which Haiti had not signed), Pressman went to Haiti. She spoke with President Duvalier as well as a supporter of the cancelled flight. In the end, she obtained the tiger, arranged for its care, and found it a home at the San Diego Zoo.

The Wildlife Protection Department is also working with the Department of Agriculture by providing reports that have been made available to the HSUS. The HSUS is also working with the zoos. The HSUS has brought many of the zoos voluntarily “closed up” following the HSUS investigation rather than have the federal authorities make a formal complaint.

The HSUS Program Coordinator Patricia Forkan has taken a special interest in protecting endangered whales. She is a representative to the International Whaling Commission and periodically attends special federal Interagency Task Force meetings on marine mammals. Her advocacy for humane considerations is strongly expressed as the group develops U.S. positions on marine mammal conservation matters.

Forkan has also been the HSUS voice on the Tuna/Porpoise problem. When Congress wanted to change the law in favor of the tuna industry, she provided valuable testimony before congressional committees, and she regularly makes suggestions on the regulations governing the U.S. tuna fleet.

Unwanted pets and the problems they cause such as bites, unwanted litters, and attacks on wildlife and domestic animals, is a major element of HSUS programming.
The manner in which food animals are raised and slaughtered is of prime importance to the members of The HSUS. Ongoing programs to insure humane treatment of food animals are among HSUS priorities.

"thrown in the towel" and agreed to compile the impact statement.

HSUS’s Frantz Dantzler, who worked on both cases, said “The Government’s animal and game managers have learned a lesson from The HSUS. They must regard wild animals as more than things to be managed for the benefit of hunters and ranchers. America’s wild animals are not anyone’s property. They, like the national parks and monuments, are part of the American Heritage and cannot be manipulated for the benefit of special interest groups.”

The elimination of the cruel steel jaw leg hold trap has long been an aim of The HSUS. Because of the alleged economic hardships that certain trappers would face, getting the government to ban the trap has been an uphill battle. HSUS personnel have worked successfully with state governments in Florida and Massachusetts, to substantially restrict use of the trap, but a national ban is not yet in sight. The HSUS has requested that hearings be held but Congress rarely moves without letters from their constituents.

Guy Hodge, HSUS Director of Research and Data Services, has appeared before congressional committees that were considering trapping legislation. Armed with a new study recently completed by HSUS’s Institute for the Study of Animal Problems, Hodge is actively pursuing this area of animal abuse.

Congressmen need a humane education too. They need the input of organizations but they also need the input of individual citizens. Congressmen learn from their letters. They learn of your concerns. It is essential that you write to your state and federal representatives and tell them how you feel about the animal problems in your area and the nation as a whole. Your letters are the stimulus for legislation and regulation.

Recognizing the important role of letters to congressmen, The HSUS has instituted its Action Alert Program. Members who request that their name be placed on the Action Alert list receive early notification of important issues. Each Action Alert member promises to write a letter or send a telegram about the subject to his or her congressman, the President, or an agency of the government.

So far, HSUS Action Alerts have been issued on the use of poisons on federal lands, the wild horse case in Idaho, and the Tuna/Porpoise problem.

You Can Help HSUS Speak Out For Animals
1. ALERT your fellow citizens about animal issues through Letters to the Editor, etc.
2. WRITE to your government to voice your position on animal issues and to encourage legislation where needed.
3. SPEAK OUT at local public hearings having to do with animal issues.
4. SEND HSUS clippings, documents, and other information relating to state and local issues.
5. BECOME a community activist. Make sure the groups you belong to take public positions on animal issues.
6. SUPPORT and encourage the enforcement of animal laws in your community.

The Humane Society needs to hear your voice too. The more voices the Society represents, the stronger the Society’s position. In order to carry on our work on behalf of animals in the nation’s capital and elsewhere, the Society needs your financial support as well as your membership. Help our continuing activities by using the enclosed contribution envelope. Join the chorus of concerned voices speaking out for humane conditions for animals.

Because of its non-selective nature and the inherent cruelty of the steel jaw leg hold trap, The HSUS strongly opposes attempting to control predators in this manner.