

The Center For Consumer Freedom®

March 14, 2014

RE: Raised Bill No. 445

Dear Members of the Environment Committee:

I respectfully write on behalf of the Center for Consumer Freedom, a D.C.-based nonprofit that advocates for consumer choice in the marketplace when it comes to food and beverages, whether choices are attacked by meddling bureaucrats who want to restrict soft drink sizes or animal rights groups who want to cripple farming because they are ideologically opposed to eating meat. CCF does not take a position on Raised Bill No. 445 but is concerned about the means by which it was developed.

The Task Force on the Sale of Cats and Dogs from Inhumane Origins at Connecticut Pet Shops (“Task Force”) included an individual from a group calling itself the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). This organization is a radical animal-liberation group that does not deserve a seat at the table on animal legislation, whether the issue is pet sales or pig housing.

Here are some facts about HSUS for the Committee to consider:

- The Oklahoma Attorney General issued a consumer alert about HSUS and is investigating the organization’s fundraising.
- HSUS is currently a defendant, along with two of its employees, in a federal RICO lawsuit alleging witness payments and bribery. (The ASPCA, which also had a representative on the Task Force, recently paid \$9.3 million to settle this case.)
- Six Members of Congress have called for a federal investigation of HSUS. In April 2011, six Congressmen wrote the IRS Inspector General showing concerns over HSUS’s attempts to influence public policy, which they believe has “brought into question [HSUS’s] tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status.”
- When asked if he would “envision a future with no pets in the world,” HSUS CEO Wayne Pacelle stated, “If I had my personal view perhaps that might take hold. In fact, I don’t want to see another cat or dog born.”
- HSUS’s CEO has said that convicted dogfighting kingpin Michael Vick “would do a good job as a pet owner.” Following Vick’s release from prison, HSUS has helped “rehabilitate” Michael Vick’s public image—and received a \$50,000 “grant” from the Philadelphia Eagles, Vick’s employer.
- While HSUS claims to represent 11 million “constituents,” its actual membership appears to be much lower. According to its most recent tax return, HSUS’s membership magazine only has a circulation of about 545,000. It appears that HSUS’s overstates its true representation by a factor of 20.
- HSUS’s management includes people who have voiced support for terroristic acts. HSUS Director of Animal Cruelty Policy John “J.P.” Goodwin is a former spokesman for the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a criminal group designated as “terrorists” by the FBI. Meanwhile, HSUS chief policy officer Mike Markarian has written that “A perfect example of effective rebellion is an Animal Liberation Front raid on a laboratory.”

Animal issues draw many voices and often are quite nuanced, but there is no reason to give a radical, deceptive, and discreditable organization a seat at the table. Groups like HSUS that have a PETA-like animal liberation agenda are not stakeholders. They are outsiders.

Sincerely,

Will Coggin
Senior Research Analyst

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1. "State AG's office issues alert against Humane Society of the United States," Tulsa World, March 12, 2014.
 2. See *Feld Entertainment v. Animal Welfare Institute, et al.*, Civ. Action No. 07-1532, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
 3. April 18, 2001 letter from Reps. Don Young (R-AK), Vicky Hartzler (R-MO), Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO), Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), Sam Graves (R-MO), and Billy Long (R-MO) to Inspector General Eric Thorson. Available at: http://www.humanewatch.org/images/uploads/2011-04-18_IGLetter.pdf
 4. *Bloodties: Nature, Culture, and the Hunt*, Ted Kerasote, 1994
 5. "Dog advocates disagree about whether Vick would be a good owner," Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Dec. 15, 2010.
 6. From a 1997 editorial in *The Abolitionist*. Available at http://www.humanewatch.org/wayback_machine_1_markarian_0/