

System Failure

A FEDERAL JUDGE HERE IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL once wrote that "cruel treatment of helpless animals at once arouses the sympathy and indignation of every person possessed of human instincts, sympathy for the helpless creature abused, and indignation towards the perpetrator of the act." The court, like many others before it, recognized that our animal protection laws reflect a sort of instinctive or intuitive sense of justice we all possess, a hardwired ability to recognize those things around us that are wrong—not just awry, but horribly and self-evidently *wrong*.

Unlike probate or tax law, for example, animal cruelty law deals with this core normative intuition, and what I think is the most important part of our legal system. If our laws, customs, and daily practices permit things we all should know are undeniably wrong, then the whole legal system is failing—rotting at the core.

It's a disturbing concept then, especially for lawyers, to think that in every state an incomprehensible number of animals suffer mistreatment and brutality on farms, in labs, and in entertainment. Such treatment is not only commonly practiced and customary, but in many cases is sanctioned by law and in some others by officials who choose to disregard the law. More often than not, the abusers go untouched.

I had to do a few pro bono animal cases while I was litigating with the Department of Justice to realize this—to peer under the veil of what is otherwise one of the most advanced and functional justice systems in the world, to see this crack at its core, to recognize the blatant watering-down and hidden lack of enforcement of our historic humane laws. And it was working these specific cases—cases involving millions of birds trapped in cages, primates slowly dying of induced disorders in experiments with no social utility, birds force-fed so that their livers expanded to 10 times their normal size—that brought me to The HSUS.

For me it made no sense to focus on ensuring justice at the edges of the system, the gray area of law, when there are cracks at its foundation, the baseline of right and wrong. At The HSUS, I work to find ways to ensure that laws meant to protect animals are actually applied, especially for the suffering animals hidden away in factory farms, in laboratories, and in roadside zoos. Whether most people see it or not, what we do will fix the system we all live by, a system we all want to work and would desperately need to work if we ourselves were experiencing the abuses so many animals suffer.

—Carter Dillard, Director, Farm Animal Litigation, Animal Protection Litigation



WALTER LARRIMORE

Concerns. We also collaborated with the Environmental Investigation Agency and Greenpeace on a campaign urging seafood giant Gorton's parent company to cut its ties with a Japanese whaling company. We strengthened our efforts in the Caribbean opposing swim-with-the-dolphin facilities, helping pass laws prohibiting the captive display of dolphins and whales in Costa Rica and Chile.

Supporting Federal Legislation

On Capitol Hill, our work was instrumental in a vote for an Interior Appropriations amendment to protect wild horses from commercial slaughter. We then helped secure a landslide vote amending the House Agriculture Appropriations bill to prevent horse slaughter for human consumption and later backed a



successful Senate Agriculture Appropriations amendment. When the amendment was threatened in conference, we worked to ensure it was retained. The passage of these amendments sets the stage for the passage of a permanent ban

on horse slaughter to prevent the killing of more than 90,000 horses a year.

The Senate unanimously approved a bill we supported to create a felony penalty for animal fighting. We secured support from more than half of the House to join as cosponsors on the companion bill and helped build the endorsement list to include more than 500 sheriffs, police departments, and other agencies, and we are poised to push the bill over the finish line in 2006.

In a tight budget climate, we succeeded in winning further funding for animal welfare law enforcement, including a \$1.4 million increase for AWA enforcement, \$800,000 for animal fighting law enforcement, and an additional \$5 million for humane slaughter enforcement—plus \$4 million to implement a new system for tracking humane slaughter law violations.

We helped draft, introduce, and build support for the Pet Animal Welfare Statute