



Oppose HF589/SF431 “Ag-Gag” Bills

Stop Agribusiness’ Attempt to Hide Animal Cruelty, Food Safety Threats, Worker Abuse, and Pollution

Through whistleblowing employees and undercover investigations, animal abuse, unsafe working conditions, and environmental problems have been exposed on industrial factory farms. To prevent these problems from coming to light in the future, big agribusiness is sponsoring HF 589/SF 431; if passed, it would become a crime, punishable by imprisonment for up to a year, to simply *photograph or videotape* abusive, unsanitary or otherwise unethical activity on a farm.

Rather than preventing problems, big ag is trying to hide them.

Agribusiness interests want to criminalize undercover exposés by introducing “Ag-Gag” bills in several states aimed at effectively blocking whistleblowers from exposing animal cruelty, food safety issues, poor working conditions and more. Some of the bills would criminalize photo-taking at factory farms, while others would make it a crime for whistle-blowers to gain employment at an agricultural operation. Additionally, some would impose unreasonable and impossible mandatory reporting requirements intended to silence potential whistleblowers.

HF 589/SF 431 would criminalize photography, videotaping and audio recording of a broad array of activities on agricultural property. Even employees and journalists who takes, possess, or distributes photos or video to document misconduct on farms could face criminal prosecution if HF 589/SF 431 is passed, whether it’s documenting mistreatment of animals, food safety concerns, worker safety violations, sexual harassment, financial embezzlement, or environmental crimes.

Whistleblowing employees, undercover exposés, and investigative journalists protect the public.

- HF 589/SF 431 aims to prevent critical whistle-blowing investigations such as The HSUS’ exposés of unacceptable and callous animal cruelty at a Vermont slaughter plant leading to its closure and a felony criminal conviction. Similarly, the 2008 exposé of the Hallmark/Westland slaughter plant in California (see photo) that led to the largest meat recall in U.S. history after revealing sick animals being slaughtered for human consumption wouldn’t have been possible. The recall prevented potentially tainted meat from being distributed to school cafeterias, *including dozens of school districts in Iowa.*
- A 2011 poll by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research found that Iowa voters overwhelmingly oppose efforts to prohibit whistle-blowers from taking photographs or video footage at factory farms. The survey revealed that Iowans oppose this legislation by a margin of three-to-one, with 65% of those surveyed opposed, 21% in support and 14% undecided.



Last year, four states, including Iowa, introduced Ag-Gag bills. *Not a single one passed*, due to public outrage over the serious threat they pose to constitutional freedoms, food safety, animal welfare, and workers. **Please stop efforts to shield animal agribusiness from public scrutiny:**

Vote NO on HF 589 / SF 431