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OF THE UNITED STATES

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Governor Terry Branstad  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol  
1007 East Grand Ave.  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

February 29, 2012

Dear Gov. Branstad,

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal welfare organization with more than 11 million supporters, 97,000 of whom reside in Iowa, we urge you to veto H.F. 589, an Act relating to offenses involving agricultural operations and providing penalties and remedies.

The intent of this bill is simple: shield animal agribusiness from public scrutiny by punishing whistleblowers and protecting animal abusers. By signing this bill into law, animal agribusiness will have unbridled and unchecked power over worker safety, public health, and animal welfare.

The Des Moines Register editorialized against this legislation, calling it “a bill that would punish those who tell the truth,” and noting that “this restraint of free speech cannot be squared with either the U.S. or the Iowa constitutions.” An editorial in the Cedar Rapids Gazette said the bill “overreaches and would serve to stifle valuable whistle-blower activity, and could even backfire and hurt responsible operators.” U.S. Senator Tom Harkin has called the bill “something that would not be good public policy” and emphasized that “because of whistleblowers and others doing undercover work, we are finding out about a lot of the abuses that are taking place in animal agriculture—and some of those abuses have just been awful.”

Upton Sinclair first shed light on widespread problems in the meat industry in 1906 with his book, “The Jungle.” Since then, whistleblowers have consistently revealed extreme problems related to animal welfare, the environment, worker treatment and food safety in our nation's food system.

In 2008, an HSUS undercover investigation of a slaughter plant in Chino, Calif. resulted in the largest meat recall in the nation's history. The meat suppliers faced a \$150 million lawsuit for sending meat from sick and injured animals to the federal school lunch program and the investigation revealed horrific animal abuse.

H.F. 589 poses serious threats to constitutional freedoms, food safety, animal welfare, and workers. We urge you to exercise your veto power and stop efforts to shield animal agriculture from public scrutiny.

Sincerely,

Wayne Pacelle, President and CEO