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Governor Gary R. Herbert
Utah Governor's Office
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March 9, 2012

Dear Gov. Herbert,

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal welfare organization with more than 11 million supporters, 56,800 of whom reside in Utah, we urge you to veto HB0187, an Act establishing the crime of agricultural operation interference.

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 Deseret News editorialized against this legislation, calling it "ill-conceived national trend that would, in effect, shield the agriculture industry from whistle-blowers or others who might be aware of legitimate abuses — a special exemption that is not warranted." It further noted that "An employee who uncovered real abuses could be prosecuted for taking photos against the owner's consent, rather than protected for uncovering a crime ... the bill is an over-reach that could potentially keep the public in the dark about health or safety violations. It deserves to be tabled."

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. HB0187 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