



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

May 17, 2013

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James T. Simpson  
North Carolina Chamber  
701 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 400  
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Sent via email: [jsimpson@ncchamber.net](mailto:jsimpson@ncchamber.net)

Dear Mr. Simpson,

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal welfare organization, I am writing to urge the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce to reconsider its support for Senate Bill 648, the anti-whistleblower "ag-gag" bill. Under the guise of business protection, this bill would prevent the exposure of animal cruelty and food safety threats as well as make it a crime for employees to report on illegal or unethical activity, leaving consumers to wonder what a few North Carolina businesses have to hide.

If agricultural businesses are following the law and being responsible, then they have nothing to fear from an employee with a camera. Only those who are running afoul of the law need special protections like those called for in S.B. 648.

There have been relatively few cases of whistleblowers or undercover investigations bringing documentation of abuse into the public sphere, but these cases have been impactful and important, and similar future investigations should not be blocked. For instance, one of our [investigations](#) into a slaughter plant in California revealed sick animals being slaughtered for human consumption. After the investigation, 140 million pounds of tainted meat destined for school cafeterias were recalled across the nation. It was the largest meat recall in U.S. history and a direct result of an employee blowing the whistle.

In North Carolina, a Butterball employee took video documentation of workers kicking and hurling animals into tiny metal transport crates and animals suffering from open wounds, infections, and maggot infestations. The investigation that followed led to criminal animal cruelty convictions for five workers.

Some lawmakers would rather punish the people documenting the abuse rather than the perpetrators themselves. I am quite sure that North Carolinians do not condone the abusive practices that investigations occasionally uncover, and they do not support legislation that prevents these problems from coming to light.

[Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty](#)

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When the full implications of this bill are considered—the undermining of transparency, the integrity of our food system, and the safety of consumers and animals alike—it strikes us as a terrible overreach by the legislature.

Our board of directors, National Council, and other major supporters include business leaders from throughout the nation, including CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. We are a pro-business organization; we want to see companies contribute wealth, jobs, and good products and services to the economy. But there is no place for animal cruelty in any reputable organization, and such behavior should be wrung out of the food supply chain and other sectors of industry wherever it occurs.

Similar bills to S.B. 648 have been introduced in 11 other states this year, and not a single one has passed. The only bill to make it out of a state legislature this year was vetoed by Governor Bill Haslam, a Tennessee Republican who himself was a distinguished businessman before choosing public service. Every major newspaper in the state urged him to veto the legislation, and calls ran against the bill by a margin of 1,000 to 1.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be pleased to provide additional information if that would be helpful.

Sincerely,



Wayne Pacelle  
President & CEO

cc: S. Lewis Ebert  
Frank Holding, Jr.  
Anne Lloyd  
Edward G. Troha  
Brad Wilson  
Jim Whitehurst