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May 19, 2005

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe:

In the May 18th hearing before the Committee on Environment and Public Works, witness David Martosko of the Center for Consumer Freedom purported to show in his testimony how “mainstream animal charities” are funding criminal activities of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). His testimony specifically identified The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) as being engaged in such activities by providing funding to an Internet service provider that distributed communiqués from the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), and specifically named employees of The HSUS as having loose ties to alleged criminal activity. This information is severely distorted and the suggestion that The HSUS supports any illegal action, or that it has ties to groups like the ALF and ELF that it has repeatedly denounced, is patently false and outrageous. We submit this letter to correct the record, and, as a separate course of action, are now considering the initiation of legal action against Mr. Martosko and his organization for the scurrilous and defamatory remarks made about our organization.

First, I want to emphatically state that The HSUS takes its responsibilities very seriously on matters relating to tactics and philosophy. The HSUS has repeatedly and publicly criticized individuals who break the law in the name of protecting animals. We have denounced individuals and groups who resort to intimidation, vandalism, or violence in pursuit of animal protection goals. We have done so at conferences and in the print and electronic media, and would be happy to provide the committee with a series of documents to support our claim. We believe harassment, violence, and other illegal tactics are wholly unacceptable and inconsistent with a core ethic of promoting compassion and respect. A public statement outlining our position with regard to these unacceptable tactics is attached and available on our web site at http://www.hsus.org/about_us/about_hsus_programs_and_services/hsus_statement_on_nonviolence.html. This position statement has been on our web site for several years.

Second, the Committee should be aware that the organization making these allegations – the Center for Consumer Freedom (CCF) – is run by Rick Berman, a lobbyist for the tobacco, alcohol, and hospitality industries. The group actively opposes efforts by health advocates, doctors, animal welfare advocates, and other public interest organizations. The group’s ostensible purpose is to unite the restaurant and hospitality industry against advances from anti-smoking, anti-drinking, and healthy food advocates, and to discredit them with lies, half-truths, and innuendo. For example, the CCF website is highly critical of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) for its efforts to reduce drinking and driving, and it also

attacks MADD through another website, www.neoprohibition.com. Other tactics CCF employs include blatantly fabricating quotations and attributing them to the spokespersons for groups it opposes and taking quotes out of context.

A May 2nd editorial in *The Washington Post* (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/01/AR2005050100625.html>) stated that “the Center for Consumer Freedom is not an ordinary consumer advocacy group pushing neutral ‘facts.’ It is, by its spokesman’s admission, funded by the restaurant and food industries.” A recent *Washington Post* story (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/04/26/AR2005042601259.html>) revealed that the group was started by Phillip Morris USA Inc., the tobacco company that also owns Kraft – maker of cookies, crackers, and macaroni and cheese. A *USA Today* editorial on May 4th (http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2005-05-04-name-edit_x.htm) added in response to a Center for Consumer Freedom ad campaign on obesity, “Every group is entitled to its opinion, but it would have been nice if readers knew straight off that the center is heavily funded by restaurant and food companies – industries with a huge stake in battling concerns that Americans are eating themselves to death. Maybe the group should change its Web site from ConsumerFreedom.com to FatforProfit.com.”

Berman was linked to the ethics scandal that disgraced then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich in 1995, and there is now a petition pending with the IRS to revoke CCF’s tax-exempt status. If there’s any question of just how extreme and out of step with mainstream American values the CCF is, an article in PR Watch (<http://www.prwatch.org/improp/ddam.html>) noted, “Anyone who criticizes tobacco, alcohol, fatty foods or soda pop is likely to come under attack from Berman's front groups,” including CCF, and that Berman’s “enemies list has included such diverse groups and individuals as” the following:

- Alliance of American Insurers
- American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons
- American Medical Association
- Arthritis Foundation
- Consumer Federation of America
- New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani
- Harvard School of Public Health
- Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems
- National Association of High School Principals
- National Safety Council
- National Transportation Safety Board
- Office of Highway Safety for the state of Georgia
- Ralph Nader's group, Public Citizen
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- U.S. Department of Transportation

The HSUS is proud to stand alongside this list of teachers, doctors, national heroes, and outstanding civic organizations as targets of Mr. Berman’s ad hominem attacks.

Promoting the protection of all animals

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Third, regarding the specific allegation by CCF related to the Internet server: in 1998, The HSUS established a listserv dedicated to discussion of animal welfare issues with special relevance to college campuses, such as the issue of alternatives to animal dissection in biology classes. We established the Inter-Campus Animal Advocacy Network (I-CAAN) and chose as its electronic host a provider known as waste.org, which caters to animal-friendly nonprofits and provides its service free of charge. They solicited donations from us in 1998 and 1999 and each year we gave them a grand total of \$150 for their services to us. We made no additional contributions.

In December 2002 it came to our attention that waste.org also hosted a listserv related to the ALF, and we, of course, were not apprised of the decision by waste.org to host this completely distinct listserv. This listserv was established after we had entered into our relationship with the company. Given our longstanding policy against illegal activity described above, The HSUS promptly moved I-CAAN to a different server, Lsoft International (home.ease.lsoft.com), on January 10, 2003. I-CAAN was subsequently closed on April 30, 2003, in a restructuring of The HSUS's electronic information and resources. Suggesting that The HSUS financed ALF communiqués is like suggesting that anyone who shops at a particular grocery is responsible for illegal activities conducted by another customer at that grocery. We addressed this very concern in a letter to Senator Hatch last year after the Center for Consumer Freedom made the very same outrageous statement at a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee. CCF's repetition of this claim simply shows that the organization has demonstrated a knowing and reckless disregard for the facts.

Fourth, the accusations made regarding staff members of our organization are nothing more than severely distorted attacks. We have 400 employees working for our organization, and it is true that one of them, as a youth nearly a decade ago, and several years before joining The HSUS, did associate himself with illegal direct action. He has now renounced those views and has become a leading critic of violence and illegal activities committed in the name of the animal protection movement. He is a convert to working within the system, and provides a stellar example to young people that they should embrace legal means of effecting social reforms and not turn down the wrong path. The other claims made by the Center for Consumer Freedom are simply silly. The group seems to operate under the "Six Degrees of Separation" rule to decide who is a terrorist.

I hope this letter serves to clarify these matters. I would be happy to respond to any questions from you or other members of the Committee. The HSUS and its more than nine million supporters nationwide – one of every 33 Americans – appreciate your continuing efforts on behalf of animals and look forward to working together on the challenges ahead. We are very grateful for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Wayne Pacelle
President and CEO
The Humane Society of the United States

Promoting the protection of all animals

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HSUS Statement on Nonviolence



The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the nation's largest animal protection organization, with a constituency of more than nine million people—one of every 33 Americans. The HSUS employs scientists, veterinarians, attorneys, animal care professionals, wildlife specialists, and legislative professionals, and relies on thousands of volunteer members to spread its message of compassion and respect for all animals, including people. The very foundation of our work is to protect animals from suffering and cruelty caused by human actions. We believe that any tactic or strategy involving violence toward people, or threats of violence, undermines the core ethic we espouse. Such tactics are ethically wrong and do fundamental damage to the credibility of the humane movement. Since its founding in 1954, The HSUS has never engaged in or supported any form of violence done in the name of protecting animals.
