



THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

OFFICERS

Anita W. Coupe, Esq.
Chair of the Board
Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.
Vice Chair of the Board
Walter J. Stewart, Esq.
Board Treasurer
Wayne Pacelle
President & CEO
G. Thomas Waite III
Treasurer & CFO
Roger A. Kindler, Esq.
General Counsel & CLO
Janet D. Frake
Secretary

Andrew N. Rowan, Ph.D.
*Executive Vice President
Operations*

Michael Markarian
*Executive Vice President
External Affairs*

STAFF VICE PRESIDENTS

John Balzar
*Senior Vice President
Communications*

Patricia A. Forkan
*Senior Vice President
International*

John W. Grandy, Ph.D.
*Senior Vice President
Wildlife & Habitat Protection*

Constance Harriman-Whitfield
*Senior Vice President
Philanthropy*

Holly Hazard
Chief Innovations Officer

Heidi Prescott
*Senior Vice President
Campaigns*

Geoffrey L. Handy
*Media and Online
Communications*

Katherine B. Liscomb
*Administration &
Animal Care Centers*

Jonathan R. Lovorn, Esq.
Animal Protection Litigation

Kathleen C. Milani
Investigations and Video

Miyun Park
Farm Animal Welfare

Nancy Perry, Esq.
Government Affairs

Robert G. Roop, Ph.D., SPHR
*Human Resources &
Education Programs*

Melissa Seide Rubin, Esq.
Field & Emergency Services

John M. Snyder
Companion Animals

Martin L. Stephens, Ph.D.
Animal Research Issues

DIRECTORS

Leslie Lee Alexander, Esq.
Patricia Mares Asip

Peter A. Bender
Eric L. Bernthal, Esq.

Barbara S. Brack
Anita W. Coupe, Esq.

Neil B. Fang, Esq., C.P.A.
Jane Greenspun Gale

Jennifer Leaning, M.D., S.M.H.
Kathleen M. Linehan, Esq.

Dwight E. Lowell II
William F. Mancuso

Mary I. Max
Patrick L. McDonnell

Gil Michaels
Judy Ney

Sharon Lee Patrick
Judy J. Peil

Marian G. Probst
Joshua S. Reichert, Ph.D.

Marilyn G. Seyler
Walter J. Stewart, Esq.

John E. Taft
Andrew Weinstein

Persia White
David O. Wiebers, M.D.

March 2, 2009

The Honorable Jeremiah W. Nixon
Governor of Missouri
P.O. Box 720
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Governor Nixon:

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our 11 million members and supporters, 190,000 of whom are Missouri residents, I urge you to take action to halt the private ownership of dangerous exotic animals in the state. The latest serious incident, in which a chimpanzee named Travis mauled a Connecticut woman beyond recognition, and then was shot and killed by police, is yet another reminder of the hazards of keeping wild animals as pets.

Travis was born in Festus, Mo. at The Missouri Primate Foundation, otherwise known as Chimparty. This facility, owned by Connie Braun-Casey, breeds infant chimpanzees, removes them from their mothers and sells them to individuals willing to pay the right price, or uses them in entertainment.

Keeping chimpanzees and other primates as pets is detrimental to them and also dangerous for people. Along with the risk of injury, primates can transmit deadly diseases. Macaque monkeys, for example, typically carry Herpes B virus, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention research concludes the disease risk makes macaques unsuitable as pets. Professionals at zoos and research facilities minimize contact with these animals, particularly following the 1997 death of a researcher after biologic matter from a macaque splashed into her eye. Yet pet owners take them to the park. In 2007, a woman brought a pet macaque monkey to a Columbia, Mo. park, and the monkey bit two children.

The public health and safety risks were recognized by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services in its October 6, 2006, Health Advisory, "Dangers Associated with Keeping Primates as Pets." (http://www.dhss.mo.gov/BT_Response/HAdPrimates10-6-06.pdf)

Missouri is a major source of exotic animals, significantly contributing to the national problem. We have been told that Chimparty may have sold as many as 50 infant chimpanzees to people across the country. The state also is home to some of the largest exotic animal auctions. This week the *New York Times* published an article about people with primates as pets, highlighting some of the dangers and difficulties. One example was a man who keeps a baboon as a pet; the animal came from a Missouri dealer. (www.nytimes.com/2009/02/26/garden/26primates.html)

March 2, 2009

Page 2

As you may know, Travis' mother, Suzy, was shot and killed when she escaped from Chimparty in 2001. It has been reported that two other chimpanzees they sold as pets to a woman in Montana were on the loose and attacked a neighbor a few months ago. One of Chimparty's recent infant sales was to Monkeys and More in Illinois, which takes the animals to schools and other venues for children.

<http://www.edandannettesmonkeysandmore.com/blank?pageid=13&catstart=0&prodstart=0>

Once chimpanzees reach sexual maturity, they have the strength of several adult humans, and must be kept in sturdy, escape-proof confinement – an infrastructure investment many private pet owners cannot make. Pet owners also cannot meet the complex physical and social needs of these animals. In November 2008, an emaciated chimpanzee was reportedly removed from a Texas home suffering from a deformed spine from lack of proper nutrition and sunshine. He was found alone in a cage littered with cigarette butts and trash.

At least 20 states prohibit keeping primates as pets, and The Humane Society of the United States is supporting federal legislation, the Captive Primate Safety Act (S. 462/H.R. 80), to prohibit interstate commerce in primates for private ownership as pets. The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives by an overwhelming 323 to 95 majority, and now moves to the Senate for consideration.

We hope that, as Governor of a state from which many infant chimpanzees and exotic animals are sold, you will take action to prohibit future acquisitions of primates and other dangerous wild animals as pets in the state.

We would be glad to work with you in developing and drafting such rules.

Sincerely yours,



Wayne Pacelle
President & CEO