



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

HSUS Statement on Pet Auctions

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) opposes the auctioning off, selling, or donation of live animals for use in charity fundraisers, lotteries, promotional distributions, or other events. This includes fundraisers carried on in person, online, over the phone, or through other media channels.

Bringing a pet into the home is a commitment that will last ten to twenty years. Companion animal and human relationships are more successful when they are considered carefully, and embarked upon with an understanding of the commitment (emotional, physical, and financial) and responsibility required. These are things not necessarily considered by someone at a fundraiser reacting to an impulse to “win” or desire to outdo a fellow bidder. In addition, there have been cases in which the business “donating” the animal was disreputable, and the auction inadvertently served to promote a questionable pet store or an inhumane seller.

In some cases, nonprofit animal shelters have auctioned off a chance to adopt a pet; this does not engender the same concerns as auctioning off a specific animal to the highest bidder, as long as the shelter or rescue organization requires adopters to follow their regular adoption process before being approved.

There are several concerning issues with auctions when the families who win are not fully prepared to take care of a pet. Without an experienced adoption counselor having a conversation with the potential adopter to determine if the animal is a good fit for the home, there is risk that the family is not prepared or that the animal will not be a good fit, and end up homeless as a result. Although the fundraiser’s attendees may be financially solvent, animal shelters and rescues receive dogs and cats every day from people who spent hundreds of dollars purchasing a pet but didn’t spend the appropriate amount of time and energy considering what is required to be a responsible pet caregiver.

The Humane Society of the United States believes any fundraising event should not include items considered harmful or contrary to the mission of that charity. Instead, fundraising items for a charity should be offered in the spirit with which they are intended, in order to foster the mission of the charity they are representing. In addition, any items offered in a fundraising event should not be harmful or conflict with the missions of other charitable organizations. For example, items like cigars should not be considered appropriate for a cancer fundraising benefit. Along these lines, any inclination to use an animal-related item in a fundraising event should be thought over carefully to determine whether that item would be promoting the right animal welfare message.

Auctioning off an animal to the highest bidder, without having a shelter or rescue provide counseling or screening, may result in placing undue hardship on a family who may bring the wrong type of pet home. This is a poor example for a charity to set, and we hope that any charities considering hosting an event using live animals as prizes will take this to heart.