

Protect Wild Animals in Traveling Shows

A Guide to Ending the Use of Wild
Animal Acts in your Community



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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Getting Started

Traveling wild animal shows transport animals for temporary exhibition at various venues, such as arenas, fairgrounds, parking lots, convention centers, and shopping malls. The animals may perform tricks, be displayed in small, portable cages, or be used for public handling. Life on the road is miserable for animals ranging from elephants, bears, and big cats to zebras, kangaroos, and sea lions. As of 2018, six states and nearly 150 other localities in 37 states have passed various restrictions governing the use of wild animals in circuses and traveling shows. More than 50 laws have passed just since 2014. You can be part of this important trend.

There are three main problems with circuses, fairs, festivals, and other venues that continue to feature transient wild animal acts and displays:

- Trainers use violent and inhumane training methods to force animals to perform confusing and physically grueling tricks on command. Countless videos, whistleblowers, and eyewitness accounts confirm that, behind-the-scenes, circus trainers use beatings and other forms of corporal punishment to make wild animals submissive and coerce them into performing difficult tricks.
- Animals used in traveling shows are subjected to prolonged confinement as they are hauled from city to city in poorly ventilated trucks and trailers. They are denied basic necessities, such as adequate exercise and access to clean cages, food, water, and veterinary care.
- Using wild animals in traveling shows poses public safety risks. Rampaging elephants have bolted out of circus tents with frightened children clinging to their backs and big cats and primates have run amok and injured children.

The public has become increasingly aware of the plight of animals used in traveling shows and are opposed to their use for such exhibitions. In response, a growing number of communities and states are passing laws that either ban the use of elephants and other wild animals in traveling shows or ban the use of inhumane training tools, such as bullhooks and electric prods.

This toolkit will provide you with guidelines for eliminating this abusive and archaic form of entertainment in your community. You will also find samples of:

- Factsheets
- Letters to the editor
- Letters to sponsors and venues
- Letters to lawmakers
- Legislation passed in other communities
- Testimony

Whether you want to write letters to the editor, contact sponsors and venues, start an online petition, or pursue a legislative initiative, the HSUS is committed to supporting your efforts to protect the many elephants, tigers, lions, bears, primates, and other wild animals who endure a miserable life simply to provide the public with a few fleeting moments of so-called entertainment.

We can provide current factsheets on dangerous incidents, problems with specific exhibitors, and a list of localities that have passed legislation restricting the use of wild animals in traveling shows upon request. For assistance contact wildlife@humanesociety.org.



Learn the Issue

Circuses have been traveling to cities across the country performing with wild animals such as elephants, tigers, lions, and bears for more than a hundred years, but attitudes have changed, and it is important for laws to reflect public opinion. Circuses have earned the reputation as the cruelest shows on earth due to the way they train, confine, and neglect animals.

STATE OF THE CIRCUS INDUSTRY

Animal-based circuses have been dwindling in popularity for decades, while contemporary circuses that dazzle crowds solely with skilled human performers, such as Cirque du Soleil, have soared. According to a November 2016 article in *Forbes* magazine, circus attendance in the United States has

69%

of Americans are very or somewhat concerned about the treatment of animals in circuses.

—2015 Gallup poll

dropped an estimated 30 to 50 percent over the last 20 years and gross revenue from circuses in the U.S. fell almost 9 percent between 2007 and 2012.

Some circuses have closed and others have eliminated some or all wild animal acts. In 2016, citing in part a shift in public opinion, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus eliminated elephant acts and Cole Bros. Circus, a circus that primarily traveled up and down the east coast, went out of business. In 2017, Ringling Bros. announced it was folding its tent due to declining ticket sales. A number of Shrine Circuses have either eliminated, or announced plans to eliminate, elephants and other wild animal acts. Under new ownership, Kelly Miller Circus' 2018 season excluded exotic animal acts.

With fewer circuses and fewer elephants being used in traveling shows, there is no better time

for advocates to finally put an end to big top cruelty.

CRUELTY UNDER THE BIG TOP

There are several problems with using wild animals in circuses: cruel training, lengthy travel, and constant confinement.

Training

Animals don't perform confusing and often physically grueling circus tricks because they want to—they perform because they're afraid not to. Trainers use violent training methods, including beatings and electric shock, to force animals to perform difficult and sometimes frightening tricks on command. For example, tigers would never voluntarily jump through a fiery hoop and elephants would not willingly stand on their head or hind legs. They are conditioned through cruel behind-the-scenes training sessions to perform these maneuvers or suffer the painful consequences. Unnatural tricks also put a great deal of strain on the animals' muscles and joints, leading to crippling injuries and painful conditions such as arthritis.

For animals in circuses, there is no such thing as "positive reinforcement"—only varying degrees of punishment and deprivation. Tools of the trade include bullhooks, electric shocking devices, whips, sticks, chains, muzzles, and rope. Circuses easily get away with routine abuse because no government agency monitors training sessions. Over the years, the widespread availability and use of video cameras by the public, undercover investigations, government documents, and whistleblower reports have provided ample documentation and irrefutable evidence that the suffering animals endure in circuses is real and systemic throughout the industry.

One of the earliest incidents captured on video by a circus-goer was the beating of a baby elephant named Mickey during a performance in Oregon in 1994. The 15-month-old elephant collapsed, screaming and bleeding as his trainer repeatedly struck him with a bullhook for failing to perform a

Learn the Issue

trick. One spectator stated, "I have never heard a scream in my life like the scream that came out of that baby elephant." The trainer pulled the elephant out of the tent and "got it down on the ground again. It was screaming and trying to crawl away on its hands and knees like a human being." The trainer pleaded no contest to animal abuse charges brought by local authorities.

A bullhook resembles a fireplace poker and consists of a long rod, sharp metal hook, and spiked tip, and is used as a weapon to inflict pain and suffering on elephants. Trainers use the hooked and pointed end to strike, jab, pull, prod, and hook sensitive spots on the elephant's body. The use of bullhooks results in trauma and physical injury, often including lacerations, puncture wounds, and abscesses. **This barbaric device is used by all circuses that use elephants.** Scientists, keepers, veterinarians, conservationists, and other authorities on elephants agree that the bullhook has no place in modern elephant management and care.

Shocking photos taken by an elephant trainer with Ringling Bros. documented the progression of violence involved in training elephants to perform circus tricks. Baby elephants are forcibly pulled from the nurturing care of their mothers and from this point forward every instinct and every natural behavior is subject to discipline. During training sessions, the babies are bound with ropes and wrestled by several men into confusing and physically difficult positions. They scream and struggle as they are stretched out, slammed to the ground, gouged with bullhooks, and shocked with electric prods.

Perhaps the best evidence of how utterly damaging bullhooks are to elephant welfare is from an undercover investigation of Carson & Barnes Circus. Tim Frisco, the animal care director, was captured on video during profanity-laden, violent, behind-the-scenes training sessions. Frisco describes how to use the bullhook by instructing trainers to "Sink that hook and give it everything you got." He goes on to say "hurt 'em" and "make 'em scream,"



Physically grueling circus tricks, such as forcing an elephant to do hind leg and front leg stands puts a great deal of strain on their muscles and joints and can lead to crippling arthritis.

emphasizing that "when you hear that screaming then you know you got their attention." Frisco demonstrates the force needed by swinging the bullhook like a baseball bat, saying, "When he starts squirming too f***ing much, both f***ing hands—BOOM—right under that chin." Frisco is videotaped aggressively hooking elephants as one trumpets in agony.

Frisco also shocked elephants with electric prods and cautioned that the beatings must be concealed from the public. Given the terrifying abuse elephants endure from bullhooks used in hidden training sessions, it's no wonder that the mere presence of a bullhook serves as a constant reminder to elephants that failure to obey commands will result in a sharp metal hook slicing through their sensitive flesh.



The bullhook is designed for one purpose, and one purpose only, to inflict pain and punishment.



Trainers condition elephants to fear the bullhook at a very young age.

Big cat trainers also use abusive dominance and fear-based training and handling methods. A big cat expert who in 2016 observed performances of Ringling Bros.' tiger act, found obvious signs that the animals exhibited fear, aggression, and stress-related behaviors. For example, during the show the tigers sat with hunched shoulders and their ears back in anticipation of conflict. When the trainer raised goads and whips, the cats flinched and cringed.

The psychological scars of abusive training can remain with animals long after they leave the circus. Big Cat Rescue in Florida has been the final stop for 21 tigers and leopards who previously performed in the circus. Their staff has observed these retired circus cats since 2000 and note that they always arrive fearful of people, especially people carrying anything that looks like a weapon. At the sanctuary, long poles are used to pull waste to the side of the cages, and the staff takes great care to never raise the poles near the cats as it causes them to flinch, wince, lay back their ears, run, roar, or hide. Similar fearful reactions have not been observed in rescued big cats who were not forced to perform.

Some of the saddest circus acts feature bears. Muzzled and leashed bears wearing ridiculous costumes such as tutus are forced to perform degrading tricks that include: riding bicycles and motorcycles, walking upright on their hind legs, walking on a balance beam with their front legs while their hind legs are high in the air, walking on a barrel as it moves across the floor, hopping over rails, precariously balancing on oversized balls, and skipping. Without cruel training, these animals would never perform such confusing and unnatural tricks. Rather than showcasing a wild animal's natural and unique behaviors, demeaning circus acts reduce these majestic animals to clumsy clowns and objects of ridicule.

Travel and confinement

In addition to inhumane training methods, animals used in traveling shows spend much of their lives on the road, transported across the

country in crowded, poorly ventilated trailers and subjected to extreme temperatures. Animals such as big cats, bears, and primates eat, drink, and sleep in the same small cages where they



Circus trainers conceal bloody bullhook wounds with a gray powder called "Wonder Dust."

defecate and urinate. Elephants are kept tightly chained and barely able to take a step. Inadequate exercise and prolonged standing in wet, unsanitary conditions leads to deadly foot problems in elephants. When chained and confined in small spaces, handled with electric prods and bullhooks and kept in socially deprived conditions, elephants become dysfunctional, unhealthy, depressed, and aggressive.

Before Ringling Bros. eliminated its elephant acts, the circus transported the elephants on trains. Court records revealed that the elephants were chained in boxcars for an average of more than 26 consecutive hours, and sometimes for as much as 60–100 hours, as the circus moved across the country.

Research demonstrates that even short-term transportation can have a detrimental impact on the well-being of big cats. One study found that cortisol levels, the primary stress hormone, increased as much as 482 percent and remained elevated for nearly two weeks following brief transport periods. Other factors such as increased respiration rates and pacing were also noted in the study.

Constant travel also means that sick or injured animals may not have access to emergency veterinary care. For example, in 2004, a 2-year-old lion died from apparent heatstroke while the Ringling Bros. train crossed the Mojave Desert. And in 1997, an elephant who had been sick with salmonella was found dead in a 120-degree King Royal Circus trailer by police in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A total of three elephants and eight llamas were crowded into the overheated trailer.

In 2003, UniverSoul Circus was traveling with a "boxing" kangaroo act. Presented as a comedy routine, the kangaroo was restrained by a harness and taunted by the handler into defending himself. The kangaroo developed a dangerous disease called lumpy jaw, which can be caused by crowding, poor hygiene, and an improper diet. The circus kept the animal on the road for months despite his suffering from this deadly bacterial infection and the kangaroo eventually died. Just over two months later, a second kangaroo died, reportedly during transport from a vehicular accident.

Extreme confinement continues once the circus arrives at performance sites. Elephants are confined to small pens or chained by two legs, barely able to take a step in any direction. Other animals are usually left in the same small cages that they traveled in. A 2015 New York City permit application for the big cat act with UniverSoul Circus showed that the tigers were kept in compartments on the travel trailer that gave them only 64 square feet of floor space, or about one-fourth the size of a 1-car garage. In comparison, the average size of tiger enclosures

at zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is 5,500 square feet.

There are many examples of traveling shows depriving animals of the bare minimum space required under the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which governs the care and treatment of animals in circuses. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) which enforces the AWA cited Carson & Barnes Circus for keeping two bears in cages that measured only about 4½-feet by 4½-feet. A Kelly Miller Circus chimpanzee exhibitor was cited by the USDA for keeping a solitary chimpanzee in a poorly ventilated, undersized cage on a trailer. The cage measured only 6-feet long by 4-feet wide by 5-feet high. An adult female chimpanzee has an arm span of about 6½-feet and can grow to 3½-feet tall, illustrating what little space was provided for this great ape.

The big cat expert who attended Ringling Bros.' performances in 2016 also observed the tigers' living conditions. He found the cages lacked adequate shade in 80-degree temperatures and some of the tigers were panting constantly, the cages were devoid of enrichment necessary for the big cats' physical and psychological well-being, the floor surface was the hard concrete of a parking lot, and the tigers were housed in groups, forcing normally solitary animals into situations of unavoidable conflict.

There is another risk associated with transporting wild animals—escape from flimsy and poorly secured trailers. In 2017, a tiger who toured with Ringling Bros. was spotted on an interstate in Atlanta, Georgia, along a school bus route, and then in a residential area where she was ultimately shot and killed by police. Transporters were unaware she had escaped until they arrived at their destination in Tennessee. In 2018, a zebra with a traveling zoo in Utah fell out of a trailer when the vehicle's rear door swung open as it was traveling on the interstate. The zebra was dragged until the vehicle could come to a stop. She sustained such extensive skin, muscle, and tissue wounds that she ultimately had to be

euthanized. In 2000, a 400-pound bear fell from a trailer while a circus was driving at night on a freeway through New Orleans, Louisiana. The trailer hit the bear and motorists found him on the road dazed and bleeding from his mouth. Traffic was halted for three hours while the bear was tranquilized and transported to the Audubon Zoo for treatment. The circus did not notice that the bear was gone until they stopped for fuel 20 miles down the road.

PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS WITH USING WILD ANIMALS IN CIRCUSES

There are several public safety concerns with using wild animals in circuses: public endangerment and disease risks.

Danger

Wild animals are clearly dangerous and unpredictable and their use in traveling shows puts the public at risk. Since 1990, scores of people, including dozens of children, have been injured by bears, big cats, elephants, and primates used in circuses and ten people, mostly handlers, have been killed. There have been countless instances of tigers escaping from cages, elephants rampaging, and even zebras bolting through traffic. When an animal such as an elephant or a tiger rebels against a trainer's physical dominance, trainers cannot protect themselves, let alone the general public.



Numerous children have been injured during elephant rides.

There is no requirement under the AWA that traveling shows carry dart guns to tranquilize an escaped animal and, if lethal force is necessary, it will be up to local authorities to deal with the situation. Any circus act that includes "shoot to kill" as part of its emergency plan is an act that simply doesn't belong in the show. In two separate widely publicized tragedies, "shoot to kill" ended up being the only option for law enforcement when elephants snapped during shows and the public, including children, as well as the local police were endangered.

**MITCHEL KALMANSON
EMERGENCY ESCAPE PLAN FOR BIG CATS
(BIG CAT(S), TIGER(S), ETC.)
ON TOUR WITH UNIVERSOUL CIRCUS 2015**

IF THE ANIMAL IS NOT IN AN AREA WHERE IT CAN BE ALLOWED TO SETTLE DOWN &/OR IS AT RISK OR HARM TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC THEN SHOOT TO KILL.

Any circus act that includes "shoot to kill" as part of its emergency plan is an act that simply does not belong in the show.

In Palm Bay, Florida, an elephant named Janet with the Great American Circus went on a rampage while giving rides to five children and one adult in 1992. Janet ran out of the tent with the people still on her back and charged through the circus grounds. She threw two circus workers about 20 feet into the air, rammed a tractor-trailer, and picked up a police officer who tried to rescue the riders, threw him, then picked him up again and tried to step on him. Hundreds of circus-goers panicked and fled screaming. Police fired 43 shots at Janet but were unable to kill her until they used armor-piercing bullets. Twelve people, including the trainer, were treated at a hospital for injuries. Janet's trainer was Tim Frisco, the same trainer mentioned earlier who, several years after the Palm Bay incident, was videotaped beating and shocking elephants behind-the-scenes at Carson & Barnes Circus.

In 1994, an elephant named Tyke who belonged to John Cuneo, killed a trainer, and stomped on and injured a groom shortly before a

performance with Circus International in Honolulu, Hawaii. Tyke then ran amok, breaking out of the arena and leading police on a chase through several city blocks. Tyke was shot and killed by police, but it took 87 shots to bring her down. One hour after the initial shots were fired, a bloodied 21-year-old Tyke was pronounced dead before a crowd of police, TV cameras, and hysterical onlookers. Ambulance officials described a scene of "total panic" as circus-goers fled from the arena, pushing and trampling each other. Fourteen people were transported by ambulance to the hospital and others drove themselves. Multiple lawsuits were filed. Cuneo paid a \$12,500 penalty to settle USDA charges of causing Tyke trauma and harm and jeopardizing public safety.

Following are a few other examples of dangerous incidents involving wild animals used in traveling shows, including incidents that caused injury to the public:

2018 – Pennsylvania

Several children fell off a camel while giving rides at a Shrine Circus. An adult passenger dangled precariously from the animal's carriage when the camel started bucking and running amok.

2018 – Arizona

Two zebras belonging to Hedrick's Exotic Petting Zoo escaped from a pen at the Chandler Ostrich Festival and wandered onto a road. One of the animals was hit and killed by an SUV and the driver was taken to a hospital.

2017 – Massachusetts

A capuchin monkey in a petting zoo at the Brockton Fair bit an 18-year-old girl while she was feeding the animal.

2015 – Georgia

A lemur escaped from a cage at a county fair and bit two bystanders.

2014 - Missouri

Three elephants with a Shrine Circus escaped from handlers, pushed through a door, bolted into the parking lot, and damaged two cars.

2014 – Missouri

A bear cub used in a traveling petting zoo nipped eighteen students at Washington University.

2013 - Kansas

A woman attending the Shrine Circus encountered a tiger, who had escaped during the show, in the bathroom.

2009 - Indiana

At least a dozen children and one adult were injured when an elephant giving rides at the Murat Shrine Circus knocked over the scaffolding stairway leading to the elephant ride.

2007 – Georgia

A baboon bit a 17-month-old boy at the Columbia County Fair.

2006 - New York

An adult tiger clawed a 4-year-old boy at the Saratoga County Fair.

2004 - Indiana

An ambulance was called to the Hadi Shrine Circus after a circus-goer was bitten on the cheek by a chimpanzee while posing for pictures with the animal. The patron was treated for a puncture wound.

2004 - New York

A tiger bolted from the New Cole Bros. Circus in Queens. Dozens of police officers pursued the tiger for 30 minutes as he prowled for a mile through a park crowded with picnickers, scattering screaming people and causing two traffic accidents.

2004 - Texas

An elephant with a Shrine Circus attacked an arena worker following a performance. The elephant knocked the man down, threw him into a wall, and pinned him against a fence, resulting in more than \$16,000 in medical bills.

2003 - Florida

A tiger traveling with UniverSoul Circus escaped while the cage was being cleaned. The tiger climbed over a car, jumped over a fence, headed down an alley, and frightened employees at a nearby restaurant.



This circus trainer was mauled by a tiger in front of 400 people during his show at a Wisconsin festival. The tiger charged, knocked him down, and clawed him. His right leg required 30 to 40 stitches.

1997 - Michigan

A muzzled and caged bear with the Shrine Circus bit off the tip of a 2-year-old child's finger.

1997 - Pennsylvania

A 400-pound tiger used in the Franzen Bros. Circus killed 50-year-old trainer Wayne Franzen in front of 200 horrified schoolchildren. The tiger pounced on him when he turned his back, grabbed him by the neck, and dragged him around the circus ring.

1993 - Arkansas

A tiger performing with the Shrine Circus escaped, ran into the audience, and bit a 13-year-old girl.

1991 - North Carolina

A 3-year-old girl required stitches after she was attacked by a leopard traveling with the Great American Circus.

1990 - Oregon

Two leashed and collared chimpanzees went out of control during a Circus Gatti performance. They dragged the trainer into the stands and pulled a child from her seat and onto the arena floor, then mauled her.

Disease risks

Rampages and attacks are not the only dangers associated with wild animals. Some species can carry diseases that can be transmitted to people. For example, primates can spread deadly viral, bacterial, fungal, and parasitic infections that pose serious health risks to humans, such as tuberculosis, shigellosis, campylobacter, klebsiella, Herpes B, Simian Immunodeficiency Virus, and poxviruses.

And while approximately 12.4 percent of captive elephants in the U.S. have tested positive for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (a human strain of TB), many more may actually be infected since TB testing on elephants is unreliable. People have tested positive for exposure to TB after direct and indirect contact with infected elephants, suggesting that not only circus workers, but arena staff and circus-goers could be at risk if a TB-positive elephant is on the road. In 2015, Dallas officials prohibited UniverSoul Circus from exhibiting two elephants during its 2-week appearance after the county health department received information that the elephants had tested reactive for TB and warned city officials of potential transmission to members of the public.

During a 2016 USDA inspection, a traveling sea lion show called Sea Lion Splash was cited for failure to follow a veterinarian's recommendation to check for active leptospirosis infections in two sea lions after titers for the disease had previously been found in both animals. Leptospirosis is a contagious bacterial infection of the kidneys that is transmissible to humans through contact with contaminated water, urine, or soil. Failure to ensure that the sea lions were not infected posed a health risk for any member of the public who interacted with the animals on stage, touched them during photo ops, or were splashed with water that may have been contaminated by the animals.

Further, all mammals are susceptible to rabies. However, rabies vaccines are not licensed for use in wild animals. People who have been bitten by



A few months after this photo was taken of a child petting an elephant at a circus, the elephant was taken off the road for a second round of TB treatment. She eventually died of TB.

wild animals used in traveling shows have undergone painful rabies prevention shots. For example, in 2013, a lemur bit a 3-year-old boy at the Minnesota Convention Center. The boy was put on anti-viral medication and given rabies prevention shots.

ANATOMY OF A CIRCUS

A circus may own some of its animals, such as elephants, but contract with other animal exhibitors to provide a tiger or bear act. Each exhibitor would need to have their own license from the USDA. Compiling a circus' history of dangerous incidents and federal AWA violations is a critical component of any effort to prohibit performing animal acts and requires research to determine what animal exhibitors a circus is using and/or has used.

Some circuses, such as UniverSoul Circus and Jordan World Circus, do not have a USDA license and contract all their animal acts. The Shriners also do not own a circus or have a USDA license to exhibit animals. Each Shrine temple that hosts an annual circus hires a circus—such as Carden Circus or Tarzan Zerbini Circus—that performs under the Shrine name, or the temple works with a circus producer who arranges for that year’s animal acts, as well as jugglers, trapeze artists, and other performers. Shrine Circus animal acts will vary from temple to temple and from year to year.

Circuses and animal exhibitors performing for Shrine Circuses have been cited by the USDA for violations such as failure to provide veterinary care, inadequate shelter, failure to provide minimum space, filthy conditions, and unsafe handling. And animals used by Shrine circuses have killed and injured people.

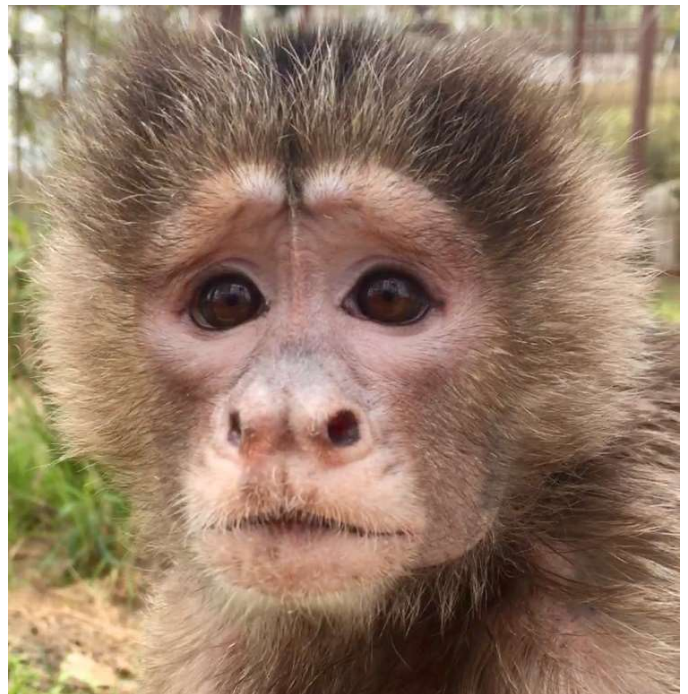
ELIMINATING WILD ANIMAL ACTS FROM CIRCUSES WILL NOT IMPACT THE ECONOMY

Some circuses have threatened economic hardship against localities considering a ban on wild animal acts or cruel training tools. The circuses claim they will refuse to perform in cities that pass laws protecting animals used in traveling shows. But in reality, whatever impact the circus’s appearance had on the economy would simply be replaced with something else. Circuses do not generate new economic spending in a region—they only redistribute a family’s discretionary spending. Most families have an entertainment budget that will be spent in the local economy, whether it’s on miniature golf, a ball game, a movie, or a circus. Furthermore, since circus owners and performers do not reside in the towns they perform in, when the show leaves, it takes much of the revenues out of the city.

To date we are unaware of any state or locality that has passed a law restricting circuses that has experienced any economic hardship as a result.

OTHER TRAVELING SHOWS

Traveling zoos and performing wild animal acts may also appear at county and state fairs, festivals, parking lots, and even minor league baseball games. Some performing animal acts will alternate between touring with circuses or the fair circuit. The display of wild and exotic animals is at odds with the intent and purpose of state and county fairs, which are intended to highlight and promote agriculture and agricultural activities.



Regardless of the venue, many, if not most, wild animal exhibitors have histories of poor animal care as well as violations of the AWA that include failure to provide animals with veterinary care and proper food and shelter as well as animal handling practices that endanger the public and the animals. It is not uncommon for these exhibitors to generate negative publicity for a venue. Examples of traveling shows that use species other than elephants, bears, and big cats and greatly diminish animal welfare include:

Cowboy Monkey and Banana Derby

Several ballparks have been featuring an act called “cowboy monkeys,” where capuchin

monkeys are dressed in cowboy outfits and tethered to a saddle on the back of border collies who run at high speeds around a field herding sheep. The dogs abruptly stop, start, turn, lie down, and stand up, causing the monkey to be violently jerked forwards and backwards and slide wildly from side to side. This inhumane and demeaning spectacle is marketed as an “amusement” act. Many people find this show offensive and it is undoubtedly frightening and harmful to the helpless monkeys who may suffer psychological distress and risk serious physical injuries. Similarly, a show called Banana Derby that frequents fairs is an act that features capuchin monkeys chained to the backs of dogs who run around an area intended to resemble a horse racing track.



Sea Lion Splash

Sea Lion Splash is a traveling show that features sea lions who drag themselves across a stage while balancing a ball on their nose, lift their body while supporting their substantial weight on just one flipper, and move their flippers in a manner to simulate clapping, waving, and dancing. The show also offers potentially unsafe public contact with sea lions. Sea Lion Splash has been cited repeatedly by the USDA for failure to provide its sea lions with veterinary care and minimum space, failure to maintain water quality, and failure to have staff with adequate training and knowledge as evidenced by staff’s inability to recognize the sea lions’ serious eye conditions.

Eudora Farms

Eudora Farms is a traveling zoo that often exhibits at fairs. Since 2001, Eudora Farms has been cited by the USDA for more than 115 violations of the Animal Welfare Act, including failure to provide veterinary care to lame and injured animals, maintenance issues that allowed a macaque to escape and kill four lemurs, primates exhibiting psychological distress, and failure to provide minimum space. Eudora Farms has also been cited for mishandling animals showing signs of heat stress while the heat index soared to 109 degrees, inadequate shelter, filthy conditions, and inadequate safety barriers. Animals with Eudora Farms have injured members of the public.

Shark Encounter

The Haai Shark Encounter is a distasteful and controversial shark show that keeps three or more nurse sharks up to 7-feet long in a mobile aquarium built into a tractor-trailer. The barren tank denies the animals the rich sensory experiences of their natural environment. As theme music from *Jaws* plays over loud speakers, a diver enters the tank to mishandle and harass the sharks who would normally avoid contact with humans. Sharks are afforded no federal protection under the Animal Welfare Act, so acts such as these go virtually unregulated.

Hedrick’s Promotions

Hedrick’s Promotions provides fairs with exotic animal displays and has a history of problems. Since 2008, Hedrick has been cited by the USDA for failure to monitor public interactions with animals, enclosures in disrepair, enclosures inadequate to safely contain animals, and inadequate shade. In 2018, an SUV driver was hospitalized, and a zebra was killed after escaping at the Ostrich Festival in Arizona. In 2017, a giraffe in distress was removed from a Texas fair after visitors complained. In 2006, five camels and a zebra escaped from Hedrick’s facility in Kansas, causing two traffic accidents that killed four of the camels.

Tiger Act Investigation



A tiger covers and snarls as Easley approaches her with his abusive training tools.



Tora flinches and snarls as Easley whips at her 31 times during a practice session.

During early 2017, an undercover investigator with the Humane Society of the United States spent several weeks working and traveling with Ryan Easley's ShowMe Tigers circus act. Our investigation found that the eight tigers featured in the act were trained and handled through the violent use of whips and sticks, forced to perform tricks that could lead to physical ailments, left in cramped transport cages when not performing, and fed an inappropriate diet. Easley, who uses the stage name Ryan Holder, tours with Carden Circus, often performing for Shrine Circus.

Jay Pratte, an animal-behavior expert, trainer and wildlife consultant with 25 years of experience, stated in a declaration provided to the HSUS, "Ryan Easley utilizes archaic training methods which entail fear, force and punishment. In my professional opinion, the tigers at ShowMe Tigers are suffering from psychological neglect and trauma on a daily basis."



A tiger snarls and covers between pedestals during a performance.

ABUSIVE TRAINING

Our investigator documented Easley using a lunge whip and a long stick as training tools to control the six female and two male tigers. He cracked the whip, sometimes making a loud noise and sometimes making contact with the tigers, and he used the stick to prod and hit the tigers. While Easley did not always use the same degree of force in whipping and striking the tigers during the show as he did during a practice session, the tigers never knew what to expect. It was obvious that the mere presence of these tools created a great deal of anxiety for the tigers.

While in the performance ring, the tigers exhibited classic signs of fear and behavioral stress. They squinted, flinched, flattened their ears back, sat with hunched shoulders, snarled, covered, moaned in distress, swatted at Easley or the training tools, crept reluctantly to

Tiger Act Investigation



A whip mark appears on the back of a tiger's head (right) as Easley whips him during an abusive practice session.



The tigers' flattened-back ears as Easley raises his whip and goad are a sign that they anticipate conflict.



A tiger cowers as Easley hits him with a stick.

position in the performance ring, and bolted back to their pedestals—sometimes in the middle of a trick.

During a practice session, our investigator documented Easley becoming visibly annoyed with a tiger named Tora who was not responding to commands. Easley aggressively whipped at Tora to get her down from the pedestal, making contact with her paws, chest and face multiple times. In less than two minutes, Easley whipped at a traumatized Tora 31 times while she flinched, snarled, and roared.

Some of the tigers are forced to walk backwards and hop forwards while upright on their hind legs, a physically grueling trick that could lead to physical disorders such as arthritis.

CONSTANT CONFINEMENT

When Easley went on tour for the circus season, the tigers were kept in pairs in transport cages that measured 6½-feet long x 4-feet wide x 4-feet high. The two male tigers, each weighing more than 500 pounds, shared one transport cage. Except for the few minutes each day when the tigers performed, they were kept exclusively in transport cages where they ate, slept, paced, urinated and defecated in the approximately 13-square feet of floor space afforded to each one. Not once were they provided the chance to exercise outside the transport cages. In fact, the tigers' exercise cage was never even unloaded from the trailer.

Tigers are generally solitary animals. When multiple tigers are caged together in cramped conditions with no opportunity to escape from an aggressive, stressed cagemate, conflicts can turn deadly. Such was the case with another circus, Circus Vazquez, where a female tiger was killed and nearly decapitated after she was left in a cage overnight with five incompatible big cats.

Easley's tigers were never provided with any enrichment items to keep them physically and mentally active. Tigers love to swim, but Easley's tigers have no access to a pool. Confined to transport cages on the road, they were never able to walk on grass, jump onto elevated resting platforms, or even stretch upright. According to Jay Pratte in his declaration to the HSUS, "The big cats at ShowMe Tigers are [...] deprived of the minimum standards of care exercised by professional institutions that house big cats in captivity."

NEGLECT

Before Easley's circus act went on tour, the tigers were kept at his winter quarters in Hugo, Oklahoma. Despite temperatures that were often well below freezing, the tigers had no heat source and were only provided a mere inch of bedding during bitterly cold weather.

Tiger Act Investigation



Walking upright could lead to physical disorders such as arthritis.

For the duration of the HSUS investigation, Easley typically fasted the tigers more than once per week, fed the tigers almost exclusively raw chicken legs, and rarely provided any dietary supplements. On fasting days, the tigers were not given bones, rawhides, or similar items to promote periodontal health and encourage natural feeding behaviors as is done at professionally-run facilities.

Tora, the tiger who our investigator documented being subjected to extensive whipping during the practice session, did not receive veterinary care for a raw open wound on the side of her face. The USDA had previously cited Easley in 2012 for not providing veterinary care to Tora when she had a 1-inch cut on her ribcage.



The tigers spent 23-1/2 to 24 hours per day in transport cages.

During our investigation, Easley disposed of a "retired" 12-year-old tiger at Tanganyika Wildlife Park in Goddard, Kansas. The facility is a poorly run roadside zoo that has been lobbying state officials to remove the state's ban on allowing public contact with big cats.



This tiger never received veterinary care for a raw, open wound near her eye.

What Experts Say

Experts agree that using wild animals in traveling shows requires inhumane training methods and fails to provide animals with an appropriate environment for their physical or psychological health. Below are a few comments from experts about the use of elephants and other wild animals in traveling shows.

“By definition, traveling shows cannot provide the space, substrates, climate and social conditions necessary to meet even the basic needs of animals. It is extremely hard for even a modern zoo with great technical expertise and expansive space and resources to meet these needs. In addition to the constant stressful travel, the daily living conditions, often with prolonged restraint, aversive and cruel methods of physical training are very harmful.”

—RON L. KAGAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DETROIT ZOO

“I observed that the big cats in Ringling Bros.’ Red Unit were treated with aversive stimuli that they were unable to avoid and are managed through fear, coercion, and punishment. ... Circuses do not promote conservation, education, or the advancement of animal welfare or management techniques. They are a cruel relic from human history, and for welfare reasons, big cats should be banned from circus exhibition and placed in more appropriate environments with trained, skilled caregivers.”

—JAY PRATTE, B.S., M.A., ANIMAL TRAINING, BEHAVIOR, AND WELFARE CONSULTANT

“The simple fact is that captive elephants, and performing elephants in particular, cannot cope with the consequences of the standard of care and living conditions governed by the use of the bullhook.”

—PHILIP K. ENSLEY, DVM, DIP. ACZM, ASSOCIATE VETERINARIAN (RETIRED) AT THE SAN DIEGO ZOO

“Elephants are self-aware, empathetic and are capable of higher-level emotions such as love, anger and grief. They have a complex system of communication, can remember other individuals after more than a decade of separation and have an understanding of death. Elephants also experience long-term psychological wounds

caused by trauma and abuse. ... Bullhooks and similar devices used to control and confine elephants in traveling shows and circuses are inappropriate and inhumane.”

—JOYCE H. POOLE, PHD, CO-FOUNDER, CO-DIRECTOR, ELEPHANTVOICES

“I have spent the majority of my life working around and caring for captive elephants, including in circuses and zoos where I helped train and manage both old and young elephants. I have used on elephants all of the commonly used training tools, including but not limited to bullhooks, electricity, axe handles and pitchforks. ... Unfortunately most people do not know what goes on behind the scenes ... Once dominance-based management is removed you can ... begin to see the elephants for who they really are: sensitive, intelligent, caring and uniquely forgiving and empathetic individuals.”

—SCOTT BLAIS, CEO, GLOBAL SANCTUARY FOR ELEPHANTS

“The Elephant Sanctuary has two decades of experience in managing and caring for elephants that have been retired from lives in entertainment. The long list of medical, physiological, and behavioral issues that our resident elephants must confront each and every day demonstrates that life on the road, performing tricks and giving rides, all prompted by negative reinforcement training and the use of the bullhook, is fundamentally hard on elephants—physically and emotionally.”

—JANICE ZEITLIN, CEO, RICHARD RHODA, BOARD CHAIR, THE ELEPHANT SANCTUARY IN TENNESSEE

“These monkeys [used in an act called “Cowboy Monkeys”] are being put in a stressful situation where they could be seriously injured or killed.”

—KRISTIN MEALIFFE, PRIMATE KEEPER, OAKLAND ZOO

What Experts Say

“To the uninformed, (the Banana Derby), may seem harmless and perhaps humorous, but there are several critical factors of which you should be aware. Capuchin monkeys are a highly intelligent and emotionally complex primate species. They have complex social relationships, demonstrate advanced tool-use, and require dynamic environments to meet their emotional and behavioral needs. For all these reasons, capuchins used in entertainment acts create serious concerns for animal welfare.”

—KEVIN J. BELL, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF LINCOLN PARK ZOO, AND STUART D. STRAHL, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF CHICAGO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY, WHICH OPERATES BROOKFIELD ZOO

“Because of their strength, unpredictability, or ability to produce venom, certain domestic, exotic, or wild animals should be prohibited from exhibition settings where a reasonable possibility of animal contact exists. Species of primary concern include certain nonhuman primates, certain carnivores (eg, lions, tigers, ocelots, wolves and wolf hybrids, and bears), and venomous species (eg, some reptiles and invertebrates).”

—THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARIANS, JAVMA, VOL 251, NO. 11, DECEMBER 1, 2017



What's the Law?

Existing state and federal laws fail to protect wild animals used in traveling circuses from abuse and neglect.

FEDERAL LAW

With the exception of horses, ponies, birds, and reptiles, the federal AWA covers most species used in circuses. The AWA requires that any owner of animals used in circuses must obtain an exhibitor's license and must comply with the provisions of the Act. The AWA mandates minimal standards of animal care in the areas of housing, handling, sanitation, nutrition, water, veterinary care, and protections from extreme weather.



This wild-caught African elephant was hauled around the country for years by a traveling zoo that performed at fairs and festivals, despite suffering from angular limb deformities in three legs, degenerative joint disease, and periodic lameness. She was eventually euthanized when she was only 19 years of age, far short of an elephant's average lifespan.

The AWA is enforced by the USDA, and in addition to animals used in exhibition, the law regulates research labs, animal dealers, and breeders, such as puppy mills. There are only about 120 USDA inspectors responsible for inspecting more than 10,000 diverse facilities—clearly an insufficient number of inspectors to conduct regular inspections and follow-up. In

addition, inspectors may not be knowledgeable about exotic species. Enforcement actions are rare and typically result in mere warnings, small fines, or short license suspensions. The USDA rarely revokes licenses or confiscates animals.

The law itself is weak, as its very minimal guidelines fail to incorporate modern animal husbandry practices. For example, the AWA does not prohibit the use of bullhooks, whips, electric prods, or other standard industry devices used by animal trainers. The AWA permits wild animals to live their lives in cages and tethered on chains, so long as they can make normal postural adjustments and adequately be able to get up and lie down. It is common for USDA licensees to keep animals in grossly inhumane and unsafe conditions, yet still be in compliance with the AWA.

Licensees are typically inspected once a year, although they may be inspected more frequently if there are chronic problems or complaints. Catching the most egregious abuse is rare since behind the scenes training sessions are completely unmonitored by authorities.

Starting in 2017, USDA enforcement declined dramatically under the new administration. With the USDA failing to protect animals regulated by the AWA, there is a greater need now more than ever for stronger local laws.

STATE AND LOCAL LAWS

Six states and nearly 150 other localities in 37 states have passed various restrictions governing the use of wild animals in circuses and traveling shows. These laws typically either ban the use of elephants and other wild animals in traveling shows or ban the use of inhumane training tools, such as bullhooks and electric prods, or prohibit public contact with certain species often used in circuses. As of 2018, New Jersey and Hawaii prohibit wild animals commonly used in traveling shows and Illinois and New York ban the use of



elephants in traveling shows. In 2016, Rhode Island banned the use of bullhooks on elephants in circuses and California banned the use of bullhooks altogether. Mississippi and New York prohibit the public from having direct contact with certain wild animals. A growing number of communities are passing ordinances that restrict the use of wild animal acts.

It is important to note that although state and local animal cruelty statutes do apply to wild animals in circuses, violations of these laws can be challenging to prosecute due to the transitory nature of circuses. For example, in 1996, while appearing with a Shrine Circus in New Jersey, Florida-based elephant exhibitor Frank Murray was charged with four counts of animal cruelty for "inflicting unnecessary cruelty towards a living animal and not providing proper sustenance to a living animal." A warrant was issued for his arrest, which he evaded for 16 years. Also, it is

often difficult to witness cruel treatment since so much of the abusive training takes place behind the scenes and away from public viewing.

Moreover, if a serious case of cruelty or neglect is discovered by a local agency, they may be reluctant to confiscate an animal such as an elephant or tiger since they are ill-equipped to house and care for these species, even on a temporary basis.

Gather Information

It is important for you to be able to speak with authority about this issue and how it impacts members of the community. Learn what circuses and traveling shows perform in your state or locality and the problems associated with the exhibitors and the species of wild animals they use.

RESEARCH

Before you get started, identify the name of the circus and animal exhibitors performing in your area, and, if possible, the names of any elephants performing with the circus that can help to identify the exhibitor. If wild animal acts come to neighboring communities, but not your city or county, you can still pursue an ordinance and suggest that, since wild animal acts perform in the region, legislation is needed to prevent them from coming to your community in the future.

Some helpful hints and questions:

- Use Google to search for “circus” and the name of your city, county, and state.
- Is there a county fair or city festival that is held every year? There may be wild animals performing at these events. The exhibitors are often listed on the fair or festival’s web site and they may be mentioned in local media promoting the event.
- Do you have a Shrine circus that performs in your area?

Also, determine if your city, county, or state already has any laws regulating wild animal acts. For example, some cities or states require circuses to obtain a permit, comply with caging restrictions, be subject to inspections, etc. In 2017, Hawthorn Corporation was cited when a circus truck transporting tigers broke down in Kentucky and authorities discovered that they had failed to obtain a permit to transport exotic animals through the state and failed to pay a motor carrier tax.

REACH OUT TO THE HSUS

Contact the HSUS and we can provide you with information about particular circuses or animal exhibitors, including a list of AWA violations, dangerous incidents, communities that have

passed legislation addressing traveling shows, as well as give you guidance in addressing this issue in your community.

IDENTIFY LOCAL ADVOCATES AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO CAN HELP

Developing a broad base of support will greatly increase the chances of ending wild animal acts in your community. Potential allies may be all around you. Look first in the most likely places: your family, friends, and neighbors, as well as animal and environmental advocates that you know.

Next, research what other groups in your city, county, and state may support efforts to end wild animal acts. Look for local humane societies, animal shelters, law enforcement, veterinarians, zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), wildlife rehabilitation organizations, wildlife sanctuaries, civic groups, wildlife experts, people who are outspoken on animal issues, and well-known and/or influential individuals.

KNOW YOUR OPPOSITION

It is essential that you become knowledgeable about the various people and entities that will oppose your efforts. You should identify and understand potential objections to the proposal and be able to present well thought-out counter arguments. Find out who owns the property where the circuses perform and if any civic groups or fraternal organizations use circus fundraisers as they will likely oppose efforts that place restrictions on circuses. This information will help when you go before the legislative body and talk about the importance of the legislation and why your viewpoint should be adopted over the opposition’s. Make sure you are well versed on all the arguments as to why wild animal acts are harmful to the animals and the public.

Take Action

Lapeer Days cancels tiger exhibit following online backlash, attacks

Yard Goats cancel monkey rodeo show after complaints made

Tigers cause a roar for some at county fair

Some say tiger exhibit at Williamson County Fair is inhumane

Benton County officials ban displays of wild animals

Loomis Bros. Circus Show Cancelled

Stricter wild animal permit requirements impact North Texas Fair and Rodeo

Multnomah County bans traveling displays of wild and exotic animals

People protested this fair's elephant. Now it has a 300-pound fake one

Bullhooks to control elephants banned in California

Visitor outcry prompts removal of giraffe at State Fair of Texas

City Council voted to ban wild animal performances from circuses

Montgomery County Approves Circus Animal Ban

Circus Elephants Banned In Illinois

York Fair tiger act: Spectacle, cruel or educational?

Hudson joins Bergen County in banning exotic animals from circuses

P.T. Barnum's Hometown Bans Wild Animals in Circuses

Non-human primates are prohibited at the Fairgrounds.

Now that you are well versed on the issue and how it impacts your community, there are several different approaches to addressing the issue of wild animals in traveling shows. Depending on your time and resources, there are a few things you can do to help end wild animal acts. Whatever approach you are comfortable with, always be polite and professional.

[SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF YOUR LOCAL PAPER](#)

Letters to the editor are an important tool for influencing public opinion as it is typically the most widely read section of the newspaper. The more letters submitted to the same publication that express similar viewpoints, the greater the likelihood that one or more letters will be published, so encourage others to write as well. It can also help shape news coverage if editors recognize this as an important issue to readers. The average letter to the editor is only about five or six sentences—keep it short and direct. Some papers list their word count limit in the letters section. Your main point (i.e. circuses are cruel and dangerous) should be clearly stated in the beginning of the letter to grab the reader's

attention. Timing is also important, so submit your letter before the circus arrives. This guide contains a few examples of letters to the editor that you can adapt for your needs.

[CONTACT SPONSORS, PROMOTERS, AND VENUES](#)

If you see posters in storefronts advertising the circus or stores distributing free circus tickets, let them know about problems with the circus and encourage them to establish a policy against promoting circuses with wild animal acts. Over the years, major corporations, including General Mills, Ford Motor Company, Burger King, Harris Teeter, Lukoil Americas, MasterCard International, and Sears, Roebuck and Co. have dropped sponsorships of various circuses in



FunFest Productions, Inc. prohibits the exhibition of inherently dangerous wild animals at its events. Animals such as elephants, tigers, lions, bears, primates, and reptiles may pose a potential safety hazard to the public and the use of wild and exotic animals in traveling shows raises concerns about their welfare. FunFest Productions, Inc. is committed to supporting the humane treatment of animals and ensuring the comfort and enjoyment of our guests.

Funfest, an event management company that produces festivals, carnivals, concerts, and similar attractions in Michigan posted a new policy prohibiting wild animals after a local advocate contacted them with concerns.

response to concerns from the public. Encourage schools to reject free or discounted circus tickets and ask that they not organize field trips to the circus. Online petitions can be used to both educate people and help urge entities to drop circus promotions. Urge festival organizers and venues, such as fairs, to adopt a policy prohibiting wild animals (see sample above). This guide contains a few examples of letters to sponsors and promoters that you can adapt for your needs.

SPREAD THE WORD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Encourage others to express their opposition to wild animal acts by spreading the message on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media platforms. Anytime you learn that a traveling wild animal show is coming to town you can post on social media sites urging your networks to not attend the show, submit letters to the editor, contact the sponsor or venue, and get active in your campaign.

ATTEND A TOWN HALL MEETING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

A good way to raise awareness is to attend a town hall meeting where your local elected official(s) or other lawmaker(s) will be present. Typically, there is an opportunity to present public comment or ask a question. This is an ideal opportunity to discuss why wild animal acts should be prohibited and put the issue right before the decision makers for a comment.

Steven Fulop @StevenFulop · 1 Apr 2016
I hate these circuses+ they shouldn't be accepted in Hudson County at all. A record of abuse+ ppl shouldn't attend

A tweet from Jersey City, New Jersey, Mayor Steve Fulop a few months before the city council passed an ordinance banning performances of wild and exotic animals in circuses, fairs, petting zoos, carnivals and more.

PURSUE STRONGER LAWS

You can make long lasting change by working with your elected officials to pass a stronger law in your community. Laws that address the mistreatment of animals in circuses typically either ban cruel training tools (i.e. bullhooks) or ban the use of elephants and/or a broader list of wild animals in traveling shows.

An animal's strongest advocate to influence and change laws is you. As a constituent, you have the most power to influence your local and state officials. It does not take any special skills or exceptional abilities. You just need patience, commitment, and the determination to communicate with those who represent you on the local and/or state level.

The following information will help get you started on passing a local ordinance. Please see our [guide](#), for detailed tips on pursuing legislative advocacy. Local ordinances make a difference and can serve as building blocks for statewide legislation.

Prepare Your Materials

Now that you have done all your research, convert that information into concise factsheets to use in your efforts to pass an ordinance. You will need a short (no more than 1 or 2 pages) factsheet explaining the problem and why a stronger law is needed. Include general information as well as specific problems about traveling shows that tour to your community. This guide contains sample factsheets that you can adapt for your needs.

The HSUS can provide you with the most up-to-date information to help create your factsheets. Also, ask the HSUS for a list of dangerous incidents in your area and the most recent list of communities that have passed legislation addressing traveling shows. It will strengthen your case if you can point out other communities within the state that have passed similar ordinances.

Learn the process

The process for enacting local legislation varies around the country, so take the time to become familiar with how things work in your community. An official or employee in your local government may be able to help you. Attend a few meetings of the governing body you hope to influence. Listen to the kinds of questions they ask and the issues they take most seriously. By understanding their general concerns, you will be able to craft your arguments accordingly.

Find a friend in office

Public officials tend to take constituents' interests seriously, so try talking to your own councilmember, county commissioner or alderman first. As much as we would like the people we vote for to agree with us, this may not always be the case. If your own council member is not interested, do not despair. Try to find another official with an interest in animal issues and pitch your idea to them. Often, your local animal control bureau or non-profit humane society can point you towards a sympathetic decision-maker.

Helpful tips for your meeting

Before any meeting with a councilmember, research the person you'll be meeting with as much as you can, develop an agenda and prepare a packet of the materials you developed to leave with the councilmember. Consider including a short 1-minute video in your presentation that shows behind the scenes training and dangerous incidents.

Dress professionally and be cordial. Practice your presentation ahead of time. If you do not know the answer to a question, tell the official you will find out and get back to them. Do not be discouraged if the official agrees with only a portion of your proposal. Compromise is often necessary in legislative advocacy. Be candid on what entities will likely oppose the ordinance.

Promptly follow up on your meeting by sending a letter or email thanking the official for their time,

Take Action

briefly re-state your position, and respond to any unanswered questions that came up during the meeting.

Develop a proposed ordinance

Next, you will need a model ordinance to present to the city or county officials, but there's no need to reinvent the wheel; the HSUS can help you find a sample ordinance or an actual ordinance that has previously passed in other cities. It is important to make sure that you and experts on the issue thoroughly review the language that you submit.

Decide if you want to propose a ban on the use of elephants in traveling shows, the use of wild animals that would include elephants, big cats, bears, primates, and other species, or a ban on the use of cruel training tools, such as bullhooks, electric prods, and whips. The current trend is to pass ordinances that ban the use of wild animals in traveling shows. Some circuses have been circumventing the intent of ordinances that ban

cruel training tools by using objects other than bullhooks while in front of the public. The elephant will not understand that something carried by a trainer, like a plastic toy sword, during elephant rides and performances is a benign object, rather than a pain-inducing device. A clear ban on specific species used in traveling shows will be easier to enforce.

In this guide you will find examples of ordinances specific to these various options.



Be prepared to explain:

- There is growing public awareness about the miserable lives endured by animals used in traveling shows. A 2015 Gallup poll found that 69 percent of Americans are very or somewhat concerned about the treatment of animals in circuses. In response, some circuses, like Ringling Bros., have eliminated elephant acts, and other circuses have simply closed down, which ultimately Ringling Bros. decided to do also.
- Using wild animals in circuses endangers public safety. Children have been injured during elephant rides and bitten by other animals used in circuses.
- Local law enforcement officials face many grave dangers in their daily work—a rampaging elephant or tiger running amok should not be one of them.
- Since 2014, more than 50 laws have passed protecting wild animals in traveling shows, including five laws at the state level.
- The proposed ordinance does not ban circuses, it simply limits some of the species that can be used or eliminates cruel training tools (depending on the type of ordinance you are proposing).
- There will be no impact on the economy if a circus chooses not to perform in your community because of stronger laws. Families will still spend their entertainment budget on other local activities. And there are many alternatives available to replace circus fundraisers and other entertainment options to rent facilities from arenas and fairgrounds. It is far more likely that a circus will adapt its show to comply with new regulations, rather than refuse to perform in a particular community.

Key provisions of an ordinance should include:

- Clear definitions of the animals to be covered or the prohibited training tools.
- Definitions of the entities that are impacted. Ideally, this language should be quite specific, thereby eliminating the need to add any exemptions. A list of exempted entities can quickly grow, will significantly weaken the intent of the bill, and can establish unfavorable precedents for future animal-related bills.
- The date the ordinance goes into effect (be flexible, it should accommodate any circus dates that are already scheduled).
- Enforcement provisions and a penalty clause.

Also decide whether the ordinance should be narrowly focused on circuses or if it should also include the use of wild animals in county and state fairs, festivals, and other traveling shows, which present the same concerns as circuses. In fact, a number of animal exhibitors that perform in other venues also travel with circuses.

For example, a 2016 incident captured on video at the Pensacola Interstate Fair in Florida showed a tiger attacking trainer Vicenta Pages during a show. Another trainer charged in, leaving the performance cage door wide open, and started beating the tiger. Between both trainers, the tiger was struck with sticks 30 times. Two tigers were in the cage at the time and could have easily bolted through the open door and confronted a group of horrified children watching the incident. Prior to joining the fair circuit, Pages and her tiger act toured with Ringling Bros. for several years.

Bills that include many species and impact several entities tend to draw more opposition. Consider whether you would have better success if you limit the scope of the ordinance.

Ordinance versus Resolution

An ordinance is a law. A resolution is an official opinion on a policy or issue and cannot be enforced as law. An ordinance protecting wild animals in circuses is preferable to a non-binding resolution. However, since some state statutes may prevent municipalities from passing

ordinances on certain issues, resolutions may be used to provide guidance to an agency or, if many localities in the state pass similar resolutions, it can help convince state lawmakers to address the matter. If for any reason an ordinance is not likely or possible, consider starting with a resolution, which may eventually lead to an ordinance or more jurisdictions dealing with the issue or a stronger state law.

Build a coalition

Getting a local ordinance enacted takes real effort and requires meeting with councilmembers, testifying at council meetings, and garnering support from others for the ordinance. Even in big cities, it can be common for very few people to get involved in local government (which means a small group of people are often influencing laws and policies). Getting active community support can make or break the legislation you are trying to pass.

Take the list of individuals and groups you researched earlier (See "Gather Information on Your Community" section) and start reaching out to them to garner support for your ordinance. Let them know of your efforts and secure letters of support, commitments to meet with their elected officials, attend and/or testify at hearings, and outreach to other community residents.

Prepare for opposition

While every community is different, the odds are that someone in your area will oppose the

ordinance. Be sure to prepare the sponsor of the ordinance with information about the opponent's concerns, and the data, facts, and talking points to address them, well in advance of a public hearing. Creating a short factsheet with common arguments and answers can be very helpful to your sponsor.

Generate support using social media

You can use tools like Facebook and Twitter to spread the word, garner support, post alerts, and keep followers updated on developments, such as upcoming hearings and votes. It can also be used to reach out to legislators and urge their support for pending legislation.

Incorporate the use of a hashtag (#) in your postings. Be mindful that using too many hashtags can clutter a post and make it more difficult to read. Keep it short, for example #YesOn317 or #BanCircusCruelty or #No2Bullhooks.

Submit letters to the editor, opinion pieces (also called an op-ed), and request to meet with the newspaper's editorial board to encourage them to weigh in supporting your position. Cultivate a relationship with local reporters and keep them updated on developments.

Final steps

Once a public hearing has been scheduled, confirm that you have the votes you need for the ordinance to pass. Ensure that you have met with every councilmember or commissioner, provided your information packets, and responded to their concerns. Don't be afraid to ask if you have their vote. Encourage as many residents as possible to write to and call their legislators. Reach out to your coalition partners to help publicize the issue and call to action through alerts and letters. The key is to obtain a majority of the councilpersons to vote in your favor. Elected officials are typically responsive only to their own constituents, so avoid alerts that ask people to contact officials who don't represent them. It could backfire if a council member is bombarded

with calls and emails from people around the state, or even around the country, as they may feel harassed rather than persuaded to support the proposal.

Public hearing

Once your elected officials call a public meeting to discuss your proposal, you will need to organize your coalition as to who will testify at the hearing and get others to attend. Work closely with the ordinance sponsor on how best to present your case to legislators. The sponsor may recommend limiting the number of speakers.

Plan ahead to make sure that everyone does not speak on the same points (a common problem at public hearings). You likely will have limited time (probably only 3 to 5 minutes per person), so dividing talking points among a handful of speakers can ensure that all of your key arguments are heard. It is especially influential if you can get those who will be enforcing the ordinance—animal control officers, sheriff's deputies, or other law enforcement officials (this varies by community)—to testify in favor of the ordinance. Professionals in uniform add an additional air of importance and mainstream acceptance to an issue.

Also, it is a good idea to make sure the elected officials can readily identify those in attendance who are in support of the ordinance. Create bright stickers or buttons for people to wear or matching t-shirts with messages that state support for the ordinance.

After the public hearing

Oftentimes, an issue is not voted on at the time of a public hearing. During the hearing, take careful notes on who speaks in opposition to the ordinance, what their arguments are, and how the elected officials respond to them. Also note what questions the elected officials ask. This will help you provide information to legislators following the hearing to help alleviate any specific concerns that may arise during the hearing.

Take Action

Check in with the sponsor of the legislation to debrief about the public hearing and decide on what steps to take next.

If a vote is taken and you win, celebrate! But bear in mind that the campaign may not yet be over. Make sure to plan your next move, such as guarding against any legal or legislative challenge to your successful measure. If the ordinance passes, inform relevant law enforcement agencies of the change.

If you lose, take all you have learned during the campaign and put it to good use when you try again. It can often take several attempts before a proposed ordinance passes, so do not be discouraged if your first effort fails. Talk to council members who opposed the bill and discuss what changes could be made to garner their support for a future bill. Remember that regardless of the outcome, you educated many

people with your message. Public education is critical to the success of any animal welfare campaign and, over time, an educated public can push for positive changes in the lives of animals.



Sample Factsheets

BAN THE USE OF WILD ANIMALS IN TRAVELING SHOWS

Wild animals used in circuses and other traveling shows are subjected to violent training, constant confinement, and neglect. Such shows present a public safety risk, are detrimental to animal welfare, undermine conservation efforts, and are dwindling in popularity. Some circuses, such as Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus and Cole Bros. Circus have closed, while others, including Kelly Miller Circus and some Shrine circuses, have stopped using wild animals.

Abusive Training

Wild animals don't perform confusing and often physically grueling circus tricks because they want to—they perform because they're afraid not to. Trainers use violent training methods, including beatings and electric shock, to force animals to perform difficult tricks on command. Tools of the trade include bullhooks—an outdated elephant training device that resembles a fireplace poker—as well as electric prods, sticks, whips, and chains.

Constant Confinement

Animals used in traveling shows spend most of their lives in extreme confinement. Elephants are often chained or confined to small pens and big cats spend the majority of their time in cramped transport cages that, on average, measure approximately 4 feet by 7 feet. Deprived of adequate exercise and appropriate social groupings and with no opportunities to express natural behaviors, wild animals often exhibit signs of severe and chronic stress. Life in an unhealthy environment on the road also means that sick animals may not have access to immediate and expert veterinary care.

Public Safety Concerns

Wild animals are dangerous and unpredictable and their use in circuses puts the public at risk. There have been countless instances of tigers escaping from cages, elephants rampaging, and even zebras bolting through traffic. And when an

animal such as an elephant or a tiger rebels against a trainer's physical dominance, trainers cannot protect themselves, let alone the general public.

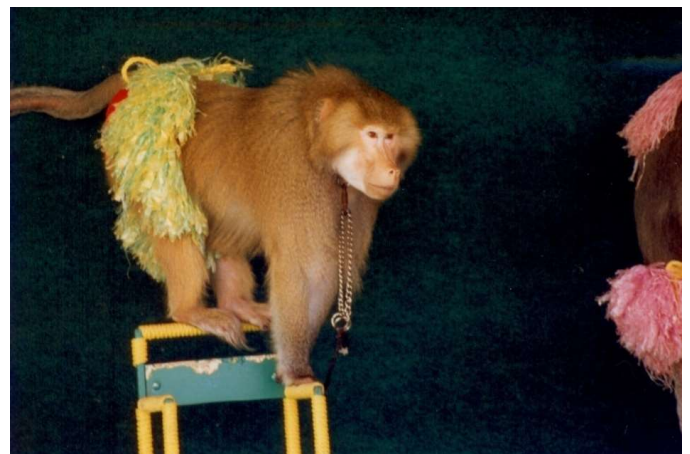
Since 1990, scores of people, including dozens of children, have been injured by bears, big cats, elephants, and primates used in circuses and other traveling shows. For example, [list a few recent incidents or incidents that occurred in your state].

No Impact on Economy

Circuses do not generate new economic spending in a region—they only redistribute a family's discretionary spending. Most families have an entertainment budget that will be spent in the local economy, whether it's on miniature golf, a ball game, a movie, or a circus. Since circus owners and performers do not reside in the towns they perform in, when the show leaves, it takes most of the revenues out of the city.

Traveling Exhibitors in [State]

Many circuses and traveling shows that tour in [State] have histories of federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) violations and dangerous incidents. Instead of providing entertainment, many of these exhibits attract unwanted controversy. [Briefly list problems with shows that travel to your area or state.]



PROTECT ELEPHANTS USED IN TRAVELING SHOWS

The use of elephants in circuses, for rides at fairs, and in other traveling shows subjects these highly intelligent, social animals to cruel treatment and a miserable life on the road where they are deprived of exercise and the ability to express natural behaviors. When chained and confined in small spaces, handled with electric prods and bullhooks and kept in socially deprived conditions, elephants become dysfunctional, unhealthy, depressed, and aggressive. Citing in part a shift in public opinion, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus eliminated elephant acts in 2016.

Stronger Laws Needed

While the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which is enforced by the USDA, regulates circuses, no agency monitors training sessions where the most violent abuses occur. Further, because the AWA establishes only minimum guidelines and fails to incorporate modern husbandry practices, a facility can be in compliance with the federal law, yet the animals can still be subjected to grossly inhumane conditions. And due to inadequate resources, the weak standards of the AWA are poorly enforced.

Abusive Training

Circus tricks, such as headstands, hind-leg stands, lying down, and sitting up, place a great deal of stress on an elephant's muscles and joints. No elephant would perform these grotesquely exaggerated maneuvers on command—over and over, hundreds of times a year—without the constant threat of punishment. Trainers use a purposely cruel and outdated tool called a bullhook to force elephants to perform. A bullhook resembles a fireplace poker and consists of a long rod, sharp metal hook, and spiked tip, and is used as a weapon to inflict pain and punishment on elephants. The use of bullhooks results in trauma, suffering, lacerations, puncture wounds, and abscesses.

Unhealthy Confinement

Elephants are confined to trailers, sometimes for days at a time, during nearly year-round transport. At venues, elephants are confined to small pens or are chained by two legs, restricting movement to a step forward or backward. Prolonged immobilization and standing in their own excrement results in problems such as degenerative joint disease and foot disorders—which are the leading causes of euthanasia in captive elephants—as well as urine burns, rotting and cracked foot pads, and cracked and infected nails. Chaining is associated with neurotic behaviors, such as head-bobbing, rocking, and swaying, which are all indicators of poor welfare commonly seen in elephants used in traveling shows.

Public Safety Concerns

Countless elephant rampages and attacks demonstrate the dangers of putting a stressed, wild, 8,000-pound animal in a traveling show. Elephants have trampled trainers before horrified spectators, bolted out of circus tents with frightened children clinging to their back, and run amok in city streets causing significant property damage.

Tuberculosis (TB)

While approximately 12.4 percent of captive elephants in the U.S. have tested positive for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (a human strain of TB), many more may actually be infected with this deadly bacterial lung disease since TB testing on elephants is unreliable. People have tested positive for exposure to TB after direct and indirect contact with infected elephants, suggesting that not only circus workers, but arena staff and circus goers could be at risk if a TB-positive elephant is on the road.

BULLHOOKS HURT ELEPHANTS

A bullhook is an outdated elephant training tool that resembles a fireplace poker. It consists of a long rod, sharp metal hook, and spiked tip, and is used as a weapon to inflict pain and punishment on elephants.

Trainers use the hooked and pointed end to strike, jab, poke, prod, and hook sensitive spots on the elephant's body, causing the elephant to move away from the source of pain. Trainers often embed the hook into the soft tissue behind the ears, inside the ear or mouth, under the trunk and chin, in the armpit area, on the back of the legs, in and around the anus, and in tender spots around the feet. The handle is swung like a baseball bat, which causes substantial pain, particularly when the elephant is struck in areas where there is little tissue between skin and bone. Elephants learn that they must obey commands or suffer the painful consequences.

Elephants who fail to cooperate may be restrained and beaten into submission, often by several people. While the most abusive handling takes place behind the scenes, just the presence of a bullhook reminds elephants that they are never free from the threat of physical punishment.

Elephants have sensitive skin. An elephant's outer skin layer is about the same thickness as that of a horse. Rich in nerve endings, the skin is extremely sensitive and susceptible to abrasions. The use of bullhooks results in trauma, suffering, and physical injury, often including lacerations, puncture wounds, and abscesses. Numerous videos have documented elephants vocalizing in distress and recoiling in fear and pain while being punished with bullhooks. Bloody wounds caused by bullhooks are often covered with a gray powder called "Wonder Dust."

Widespread Support for Humane Handling Practices

Scientists, keepers, veterinarians, conservationists, professionally-run zoos, and

other authorities on elephants agree that the bullhook has no place in modern elephant management and care.

Positive reinforcement training for elephants has proved to be safe, humane, and highly effective. This state-of-the-art method, referred to as protected contact, does not use implements like the bullhook. It reduces aggression and allows elephants to behave more naturally. It was developed more than 20 years ago and is currently used by sanctuaries and more than half the zoos that house elephants in the U.S. as well as a number of zoos worldwide.

Bullhooks Jeopardize Safety

The use of bullhooks and other forms of corporal punishment on elephants promotes aggressive behavior. As demonstrated in numerous rampages and attacks, a trainer armed with a bullhook cannot protect themselves, let alone the general public, when an elephant rebels against a trainer's physical dominance.

Ban the Bullhook

There is no safe, proper, or humane way to use bullhooks. This archaic device causes physical injury and emotional distress. Banning bullhooks and eliminating the use of elephants in entertainment is a growing trend.

Sample Letters to the Editor

These samples can be used for inspiration, but do not copy and submit these samples verbatim as newspapers prefer to print letters that are unique submissions to their publication.

BAN ON WILD ANIMALS IN TRAVELING SHOWS

The use of wild animals in circuses and other traveling shows is outdated and inhumane. Trainers use violent methods to force animals to perform confusing and physically grueling tricks on command. Animals are subjected to prolonged confinement as they are hauled from city to city in poorly ventilated trucks and trailers. They are denied basic necessities, such as adequate exercise and access to clean cages, food, water, and veterinary care. Using wild animals also poses public safety risks. Rampaging elephants have bolted out of circus tents with frightened children clinging to their backs and big cats and primates have run amok and injured children.

The public's enthusiasm for animal-based circuses has been dwindling for decades. Many circuses are responding to the public's distaste for the use of wild animals in circuses by choosing to modify their shows, while others, including Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, are simply closing due to declining ticket sales. We urge [city/county] to pass an ordinance ending the use of wild animal acts. It is high time to end these outdated acts once and for all.

BAN ON ELEPHANTS IN TRAVELING SHOWS

With all that is now known about the rich and varied lives that elephants naturally lead, it's become apparent that life in circuses or other traveling shows is nothing but misery for them. They are denied everything that is natural and important to them, are trained with punishment and pain, bullied to perform unnatural and silly tricks, and endure extreme confinement while chained in trucks and trailers during months of grueling travel each year.

Elephants don't perform confusing and often physically grueling circus tricks because they want to—they perform because they're afraid not to. Trainers use bullhooks to strike, hook, and jab sensitive areas to force elephants into physically difficult and painful positions for tricks. The public has become increasingly opposed to the use of elephants in exhibitions. A growing number of states, counties, and cities have responded by passing legislation that addresses this issue. It's time to end the use of elephants in [city/county].

BAN ON BULLHOOKS

The circus isn't fun and games for elephants. Elephants don't perform confusing and often physically grueling circus tricks because they want to—they perform because they're afraid not to. They are conditioned through cruel behind-the-scenes training sessions to perform or suffer the painful consequence. Handlers use bullhooks—an archaic tool resembling a fireplace poker and consisting of a long rod with a spiked tip and a sharp metal hook. Elephants are hooked, jabbed, and hit on sensitive areas, including inside and around elephants' ears, mouth, and anus, in their armpit area, and around their feet. Elephants are conditioned to fear the bullhook, so just the sight of this barbaric device causes emotional distress.

Around the country, numerous cities have recognized the cruelty and suffering bullhooks inflict and have taken action to ban them. It's time for [city/county] to do our part in ending this abuse by banning bullhooks once and for all.

Sample Letters to Sponsors/Venues

Add a paragraph about problems with specific circuses/exhibitors coming to your area.

LETTER TO SPONSOR/HOST OF A CIRCUS

I urge you to withdraw your [sponsorship/permission to use your land/venue] for the [name of circus] and establish a policy prohibiting future wild animal displays. With the wealth of scientific information currently available, it is clear that life in a traveling show cannot possibly meet the complex needs of elephants, tigers, lions, and other wild animals, or come close to providing the rich and varied lives they naturally lead. Inhumane training practices, long and exhausting periods of transport, intensive confinement and chaining, and the unnatural, painful tricks these animals are forced to perform all take an immense physical and psychological toll.

Performing animals are beaten, whipped, jabbed, or shocked with an electric prod to force them to perform unnatural and often confusing tricks. Wild animals used in traveling shows and circuses spend most of their time confined in small cages, trailers, trucks, or chained—the animals eat, sleep, urinate, and defecate all in the same cramped area.

The animals also pose a threat to public safety by bringing people dangerously close to unpredictable, powerful, and stressed wild animals. There are countless examples of elephants rampaging, tigers escaping, and similar tragedies that resulted in property damage, injuries, and even death.

A growing number of state and local governments are passing restrictions governing the use of wild animals in response to public concerns about how the animals are mistreated.

[Sponsoring/promoting/hosting] such an event sends the message that abusing wildlife for our amusement is acceptable. I respectfully urge you to sever ties with future traveling shows or circuses that use wild animal acts. Thank you for your time and consideration.

LETTER TO FAIR FEATURING WILD ANIMALS

I am writing to ask that you consider establishing a policy against allowing dangerous wild animal displays at [fair name]. You may have heard about an animal trainer who was attacked by a tiger during a show at the Pensacola Interstate Fair in Florida in 2016. The incident occurred in front of a group of school children and the trainer was rushed to a hospital where she had to have surgery for her injuries. Unfortunately, such tragedies have happened before, and will happen again, as long as powerful, wild, and unpredictable animals such as big cats, bears, elephants, and primates are used in traveling shows.

In addition to the danger associated with these types of exhibits, the animals suffer from a lack of basic care, prolonged confinement as they are transported from venue to venue, and abusive training methods commonly used to force wild animals to perform.

Many wild animal exhibitors that appear at state and county fairs have a history of violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act that include a lack of safety barriers, unsafe handling, inadequate veterinary care, and filthy cages.

Dangerous wild animal exhibits present tremendous public safety risks and potentially devastating liability for your fair. They also distract from your fair's educational objectives and cheapen the wholesome family entertainment you work so hard to provide by glossing over the animal cruelty and exploitation inherent in such attractions. I urge you to establish a policy that prohibits dangerous wild animal displays at the [fair name].

Thank you for giving this matter your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sample Request for Meeting

TIPS TO SCHEDULING A MEETING WITH YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL:

- You can attend the meeting by yourself or invite other constituents (i.e. your friends, family, neighbors) to participate in the meeting.
- Select dates that are at least a week or two away.
- Be flexible on your availability to meet.
- Plan for the meeting to last about 15 minutes.
- Be aware that you may actually meet with a legislative aide rather than your elected official.
- Call or e-mail to confirm the meeting two or three days before the scheduled meeting time.

[Email Subject Line] Constituent Meeting Request

Dear Councilmember [Legislator's Last Name],

My name is [your name]. I am a constituent and would like to schedule a meeting with you or an appropriate staff person to discuss an ordinance to protect wild animals used in circuses. Would you be available on any of the following dates [list dates]?

[If others are attending] I expect several other constituents to attend the meeting and will forward their names prior to the meeting date.

I am hopeful that [city name] will join more than [current tally of ordinances from HSUS factsheet] other localities in [#] states that have passed various restrictions governing the use of wild animals in circuses and traveling shows in the interest of animal welfare and public health and safety.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[your name]

[address]

[phone # and e-mail]

Sample Letters to Legislators

Add a paragraph about problems with specific circuses/exhibitors coming to your area, such as Animal Welfare Act violations and dangerous incidents.

BAN WILD ANIMALS IN TRAVELING SHOWS

I urge your support for an ordinance prohibiting the display or performance of wild animals in [city]. With the wealth of scientific information currently available, it is clear that life in a traveling show cannot possibly meet the complex needs of elephants, tigers, lions, and other wild animals, or come close to providing the rich and varied lives they naturally lead. Inhumane training practices, long and exhausting periods of transport, intensive confinement and chaining, and the unnatural and sometimes painful tricks these animals are forced to perform all take an immense physical and psychological toll. Many experts, including scientists, conservationists, welfare experts, and veterinarians agree that wild animals have no place in entertainment.

Trainers use pain and punishment to train wild animals to perform circus tricks. This involves beating, poking, whipping, or even shocking animals with electric prods. In traveling shows, animals spend most of their lives in cages, trailers, or chains. This intense confinement, lack of exercise, and inability to express natural behaviors causes immense physical and psychological suffering among all species. They commonly develop neurotic behaviors and suffer physical ailments. Elephants, for example, often develop chronic foot disease, lameness, and arthritis.

Traveling shows pose a threat to public health and safety by bringing people dangerously close to incredibly powerful, unpredictable, and stressed wild animals. There have been numerous cases of wild animals in circuses running amok or attacking trainers or members of the public. Wild animals also have the potential to transmit various diseases. For example, approximately 12.4 percent of captive elephants in the U.S. have tested positive for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (a human strain of

TB). Many more may actually be infected since TB testing on elephants is unreliable.

Current laws are not enough to protect animals in circuses and traveling shows. The federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) sets minimal standards for the handling, care, treatment, and transport of animals in traveling shows. These standards are insufficient and poorly enforced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Even facilities with multiple serious infractions under the AWA are frequently given multiple chances to correct violations and rarely face fines or license revocations.

This ordinance would not adversely impact the local economy. Economists agree that circuses do not generate new economic spending, but rather redistribute a family's discretionary spending. Most households have a budget that they will spend on entertainment, whether that entertainment is bowling, miniature golf, a movie, or a circus. Since the owners and workers associated with traveling shows do not live in [city], most of the money generated from these performances leaves town with the show.

I respectfully urge you to support an ordinance that would significantly improve animal welfare and protect public safety by prohibiting the display or performance of wild animals in [city]. Thank you for your consideration.

BAN ELEPHANTS IN CIRCUSES

I urge your support for an ordinance prohibiting the display of elephants in circuses and traveling shows, which cannot meet the complex physical, psychological, and social needs of these cognitively and socially complex animals.

Inhumane training practices, long and exhausting periods of transport, intensive confinement, and the unnatural, painful tricks that elephants are forced to perform all take an immense physical and psychological toll. Many experts, including scientists, conservationists, welfare experts, and veterinarians, agree that elephants have no place in entertainment.

Elephants in circuses and traveling shows are subject to violent training and handling methods. Bullhooks are devices that resemble a fireplace poker and are used to train, dominate, and punish elephants. The use of bullhooks regularly results in trauma, suffering, and physical injury. Countless videos document elephants vocalizing in distress and displaying signs of fear and pain while being punished with bullhooks, and painful, bloody lacerations or abscesses are far too common.

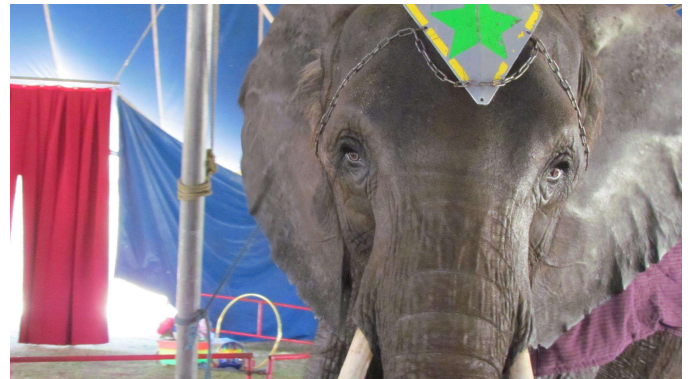
In the wild, elephants are on the move for 20 hours per day as they forage, care for young, and socialize. In contrast, elephants used in circuses and traveling shows are kept chained or confined to small pens except for the few minutes when they perform. Prolonged confinement causes chronic foot disease, lameness, and arthritis--the most common reasons for the euthanasia of performing elephants.

Elephants also pose a threat to public health and safety. Circuses and traveling shows bring people dangerously close to an incredibly strong, stressed, and unpredictable wild animal. There have been numerous instances when elephants have run amok, sometimes causing property damage, injury, or even death. Furthermore, elephants can carry a strain of tuberculosis that is contagious to humans.

Approximately 12.4 percent of captive elephants in the U.S. have tested positive for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (a human strain of TB). Many more may actually be infected since TB testing on elephants is unreliable.

Due to their transitory nature and substandard management practices, circuses cannot and do not provide elephants with the space and freedom needed to engage in critical natural behaviors. This has enormous consequences not only for an elephant's health and wellbeing, but also for the health and safety of circus workers and the general public.

I respectfully urge you to support an ordinance that would significantly improve elephant welfare and protect public safety by prohibiting the display of elephants in traveling shows and circuses. Thank you for your consideration.



BAN BULLHOOKS AND SIMILAR DEVICES

I urge your support for an ordinance prohibiting the use of bullhooks and similar inhumane devices on elephants in traveling shows and circuses. These devices are not only cruel and abusive, but they promote aggressive behavior in the animals and put trainers and audiences at risk. Two states and more than a dozen communities have already banned the use of bullhooks on elephants.

Bullhooks are archaic devices that resemble fireplace poker. They are approximately 2-3 feet in length, and consist of a long, hard rod, a sharp metal hook, and a spiked tip. Bullhooks are commonly used to hook, strike, poke, and prod sensitive spots on an elephant's body to force the animal to perform difficult and confusing circus tricks.

An elephant's skin is rich in nerve endings and so sensitive they can feel the pain of an insect bite. Trainers often hook and hit elephants behind the ears, on the back of the legs, and under the chin and trunk. Bullhook handles can also be used like clubs and cause significant pain, particularly when the elephant is hit in areas with little tissue separating skin from bone.

The use of bullhooks on elephants regularly results in trauma, suffering, and physical injury. Numerous videos document elephants vocalizing in distress and displaying signs of fear and pain while being punished with bullhooks. Bloody wounds are typically concealed with a gray powder called Wonder Dust. The mere presence of a bullhook serves as a constant reminder to elephants of the pain and suffering that can be inflicted at any time.

An alternative to dominance-style circus training, called protected contact, is used in sanctuaries and at many zoos both in the U.S. and around the world. Instead of dominance and punishment, the trainer forms a partnership with the elephants and skillfully solicits their voluntary cooperation using treats and praise. This allows

keepers and veterinarians to provide routine husbandry, perform veterinary exams and procedures, and administer treatments. In one study, elephants chose to work with trainers 99 percent of the time.

The use of bullhooks and other forms of corporal punishment on elephants promotes aggressive behavior. As demonstrated in multiple rampages and attacks, a trainer armed with a bullhook cannot protect themselves, let alone the general public, when an elephant rebels against a trainer's physical dominance. Elephants who previously injured or killed trainers have become more docile, more content, and exhibit fewer neurotic behaviors when they are transitioned from circus-style training to handling with positive reinforcement.

I respectfully urge you to support an ordinance that would significantly improve elephant welfare and protect public safety by prohibiting the use of bullhooks and similar devices on elephants in traveling shows and circuses. Thank you for your consideration.



Sample Preamble

Some municipalities may want to include a preamble (or findings) that provides background on the issue and justification for the introduction of an ordinance or a resolution.

WHEREAS, conditions inherent to traveling performances, including constant travel, temporary and collapsible facilities, and the prolonged confinement and physical coercion of animals, subject wild animals to compromised welfare and chronic stress, and present public and worker health and safety risks; and

WHEREAS, wild animals are forced to perform unnatural tricks requiring extreme physical coercion, including, but not limited to the use of food and water restrictions, electric shock devices, bullhooks, metal bars, whips, and muzzles among other abuses; and

WHEREAS, wild animals used in traveling performances suffer severe and extended confinement, and, deprived of natural movements, free exercise, and natural behaviors, are prone to chronic stress, behavioral, health, and psychological problems; and

WHEREAS, wild animals used in traveling performances bring people dangerously close to unpredictable wild animals by displaying animals in inappropriate, uncontrolled areas that are not suited for the exhibition of such animals; and

WHEREAS, traveling wild animal performances use collapsible, temporary, mobile facilities, which risk escape and serious harm to animals, workers, and the public; and

WHEREAS, the frequent mobility of traveling performances using wild animals complicates oversight such that agencies and authorities cannot properly monitor, evaluate, or follow through regarding the condition of animals or facilities, or their history of potential injuries, incidents, illnesses, violations, or other issues, and so cannot properly protect animals, workers, or the public; and

WHEREAS, using wild as commodities for traveling performances adds nothing to the understanding and conservation of such animals and the natural environment, and actually undermines conservation efforts necessary to protect threatened and endangered species.

WHEREAS, the Council of the [name of city, town, or county] deems it advisable for the welfare of the city and the prevention of animal cruelty to prohibit the performance of wild animals for public entertainment or amusement within the City.

Now, Therefore, the Council of the [name of city, town, or county] enacts as follows:

Sample Ordinances

Following are recommended provisions to include in an ordinance that bans wild animal displays at circuses, fairs, and similar attractions as well as ordinances that have previously passed in other jurisdictions. Be mindful that some jurisdictions may be limited in what can be included in an ordinance.

It is important that you and experts thoroughly review the language drafted by your city/county legislative counsel prior to introduction. We can help you review—please email wildlife@humanesociety.org.

Sec 1. Definitions.

As used in this Article, the following words and phrases have the following meanings:

Department means the [enforcement agency, such as the Department of Health and Human Services]

Director means the Director of the [enforcement agency, such as Department of Health and Human Services].

Display means any exhibition, fair, act, circus, ride, or similar undertaking in which animals are required to perform tricks, give rides, or participate as accompaniments for the entertainment, amusement, or benefit of a live audience, whether or not a fee is charged.

Mobile or traveling housing facility means a transporting vehicle such as a truck, trailer or railway car, used to transport or house animals while traveling for exhibition or other performance.

Traveling animal act means any display of animals where such animals are transported to, from, or between locations for the purpose of such display, in a mobile or traveling housing facility.

Wild or exotic animal means any live animal from any of the following scientific classifications:

- a) Artiodactyla (including hippopotamuses, giraffes, camels, and llamas, but excepting cattle, swine, sheep, and goats);
- b) Crocodylia (including alligators and crocodiles);
- c) Elephantidae (elephants);
- d) Felidae (including tigers, lions, jaguars, leopards, cheetahs, and cougars, or any hybrid thereof, but excluding domestic cats);
- e) Marsupialia (including kangaroos);
- f) Non-human primates (including apes, monkeys, and lemurs);
- g) Perissodactyla (including rhinoceroses, tapirs, and zebras);
- h) Pinnipedia (including seals, sea lions, and walruses);
- i) Ursidae (bears);
- j) Elasmobranchii (including nurse sharks and lemon sharks)

Sec 2. Prohibited acts.

It shall be unlawful for any person to allow for the participation of a wild or exotic animal in a traveling animal act.

Sec. 3. Administration and enforcement.

The director is hereby charged with the responsibility for the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this article under the direction of the county executive.

Sec. 4. Violations of article.

Any person who violates any provision of this article shall be subject to punishment for a \$500 maximum fine and 30 days in jail. Each day a violation continues to exist shall constitute a separate offense, as shall each wild or exotic animal exhibited.

Orange County, North Carolina, bans the display of wild animals. This is a solid ordinance, but it would be stronger without the exemption for “animal-related educational purposes by non-profit groups ...”

AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING THE DISPLAY OF WILD AND EXOTIC ANIMALS WITHIN ORANGE COUNTY WHEREAS, in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens and to prevent the abuse of wild and exotic animals, the County of Orange has determined that the display of wild or exotic animals should be prohibited within the County,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF ORANGE COUNTY as follows:

Section 1. Definitions. As used hereinafter, the following terms shall mean:

Board: The Board of County Commissioners of Orange County.

Director: The Director of the Orange County Health Department.

Display: “Display” shall mean any exhibition, act, circus, public show, trade show, photographic opportunity, carnival ride, parade, race, performance, or similar undertaking in which animals are required to perform tricks, fight, wrestle or participate in performances for the amusement or entertainment of an audience, whether or not a fee is charged. “Display” shall not include the use or exhibition of animals for animal-related educational purposes by non-profit groups or institutions or individuals. “Displayed” means to be the subject thereof.

Educational Purposes: Teaching and instructing with the intent and effect of imparting knowledge to others.

Person: Any individual, family, group of individuals, corporation, partnership, organization, or institution recognized by law as a person.

Wild or Exotic Animals: “Wild or exotic animal” shall mean any or all of the following animals, whether bred in the wild or in captivity, and also any or all of their hybrids with domestic species. It is not the intent of this section to include domesticated species such as horses, cows, sheep or llamas. The words in parentheses are intended to act as examples only and are not to be construed as being an exhaustive list or to otherwise limit the generality of each group of animals:

1. Non-human primates and prosimians (such as chimpanzees, monkeys);
2. Felids, except domesticated cats;
3. Canids, including wolf hybrids and except domesticated dogs;
4. Ursids (bears);
5. Elephants;
6. Marine mammals (such as whales, seals, sea lions, dolphins and otters);
7. Cocodilians (such as alligators and crocodiles);
8. Marsupials (such as kangaroos and opossums);
9. Snakes and reptiles;
10. Ungulates (such as hippopotamus, rhinoceros, giraffe, camel, zebra, deer);
11. Hyenas;
12. Mustelids (such as skunks, weasels, otters and badgers);
13. Procyonids (such as raccoons and coatis);
14. Endentates (such as anteaters, sloth and armadillos);
15. Viverrids (such as mongooses, civets, and genets); and
16. Camels.

Section 2. Display of Wild or Exotic Animals Prohibited. It shall be unlawful for any person to display or sponsor a display of wild or exotic animals on any public or private property within Orange County.

Section 3. Enforcement. Any person displaying or sponsoring a display of a wild or exotic animal at the date that this Ordinance is adopted to prohibit such display shall comply with the Ordinance's prohibition on the display of wild or exotic animals within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Ordinance.

Investigations. The Orange County Animal Control Division shall investigate any complaints, reports or information that wild or exotic animals are being displayed or will be displayed in Orange County in violation of this Ordinance to determine whether or not a violation has occurred.

(1) If the Orange County Animal Control Division determines that wild or exotic animals are being displayed in Orange County in violation of this Ordinance, the investigating officer(s) shall issue a written warning to the person displaying the wild or exotic animal(s). The written notice shall be delivered, via hand delivery to a responsible person or via posting at the site of the display.

(2) The person against whom the warning is issued shall desist all activities in violation of this Ordinance as of the business day the written notice is given.

Penalties.

(1) Criminal Offenses - A violation of any provision of this Ordinance constitutes a Class 3 Misdemeanor and shall be punishable as provided in North Carolina General Statutes, Section 14-4. Each day's continuing violation shall constitute a separate offense.

(2) Civil penalty - A person who violates any of the provisions of this Ordinance shall be subject to a civil penalty of fifty dollars (\$50.00) per animal. No penalty shall be assessed until the person alleged to be in violation has been notified of the existence and nature of the violation by letter. Each day of a continuing violation shall constitute a separate violation. The Director shall make or cause to be made a written demand for payment to be served upon the person in violation, which shall set forth in detail a description of the violation for which the penalty has been imposed. If payment is not received or equitable settlement reached within fourteen (14) days after demand for payment is made, the matter may be referred to the County Attorney for institution of a civil action in the name of the County of Orange in the appropriate division of the general court of justice for recovery of the penalty.

(3) Injunctive Relief.

(a) Whenever the Orange County Health Department, the Orange County Planning and Inspections Department or the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has cause to believe that any person is violating or threatening to violate this Ordinance, the agency shall report the violation or threatened violation to the Director. The Director may, either before or after the institution of any other action or proceeding authorized by this Ordinance, institute a civil action in the name of the County of Orange for injunctive relief to restrain the violation of threatened violation.

(b) Upon determination by a court that an alleged violation is occurring or is threatened, it shall enter such orders or judgements as are necessary to abate the violation or to prevent the threatened violation. The institution of any action for injunctive relief under this section shall not relieve any civil or criminal penalty prescribed for violations of this Ordinance.

Section 8. Severability. If any provision of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is declared to be invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of the Ordinance are declared to be severable.

Adopted unanimously on first reading this 14th day of August 2001.

Before providing examples to legislators, review ordinances for language that is unclear or weakens the ordinance or creates loopholes rendering the ordinance ineffective.

This Los Angeles, California, ordinance makes clear that using a bullhook on an elephant *or even displaying a bullhook* in the presence of an elephant is prohibited.

SEC. 53.74. BULLHOOKS - PROHIBITION ON USE.

(Added by Ord. No. 183,060, Eff. 6/23/14, Oper. 1/1/17.)

It shall be unlawful for any person to use a bullhook, ankus, baseball bat, axe handle, pitchfork or other implement or tool designed to inflict pain for the purpose of training or controlling the behavior of an elephant in the City of Los Angeles. For purposes of this section, the term use shall include brandishing, exhibiting or displaying a bullhook or an implement designed to look like a bullhook in the presence of an elephant for the purpose of training or controlling the behavior of the elephant.

This Destin, Florida, ordinance does not explicitly mention that bullhooks are considered a “manual device.” Circus trainers would claim that they merely use the bullhook as a guide rather than as a tool “which will cause, or is likely to cause, physical injury or suffering,” so it is likely this ordinance would only be enforced if a law enforcement officer witnessed a trainer inflict an injury while the elephant was in their jurisdiction.

Sec. 4-21. - Performing animal exhibitions.

(a) No person shall conduct, sponsor or participate in a performing animal exhibition, display, circus or rodeo in which animals are induced or encouraged to perform through the use of chemical, mechanical, electrical or manual devices in a manner which will cause, or is likely to cause, physical injury or suffering.

This Pasadena, California, ordinance bans wild animals on public property, but it would not prevent circuses from performing on private property, such as mall parking lots, many arenas, and raceways.

6.40.040 - Display of wild or exotic animals/rodeos prohibited.

A. It is unlawful for any person to display or sponsor a display of wild or exotic animals on any public property within the city.

Sample Testimony

There is normally a time limit of about three minutes for oral testimony, so keep your remarks brief.

BAN WILD ANIMAL ACTS

Good morning committee members. My name is [name] and I have lived in [city/county] for [#] years. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I respectfully urge you to support [ordinance number], an act to prohibit the use of wild animals in circuses and other traveling shows.

With the wealth of information that is now available about the rich and varied lives that elephants, lions, tigers, bears and other wild animals naturally lead, it's become apparent that life in a traveling show is nothing but misery for them. Animals in circuses and other traveling displays are trained with pain and the fear of punishment, bullied to perform silly tricks, caged and chained in trains, trucks and trailers, forced to endure months of grueling travel each year, separated from their companions, and routinely denied natural behaviors and adequate exercise.

Relying on federal government inspections of performing wild animals does not ensure animal welfare or public safety. The federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) establishes only very minimal guidelines, is vaguely worded, and is poorly enforced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Licensees can – and do – keep animals in inhumane and unsafe conditions, yet still be in compliance with the AWA.

Careful research reveals that shows and displays that feature wild animals all too often have miserable records of animal care and commonly fail to comply with animal protection laws, yet they continue to be licensed by the USDA.

These types of animal displays also pose a threat to public safety by bringing people into dangerously close proximity to incredibly powerful, unpredictable, and stressed wild animals. Wild animals used in circuses and other travelling exhibitions have attacked people or run amok, sometimes causing death, injury, or

property damage. Animal handlers cannot protect themselves, let alone the general public, when an elephant or big cat decides to rebel. In 2016, a tiger attacked an animal trainer in front of horrified children during a show at the Pensacola Interstate Fair in Florida.

A prohibition on circuses will not have an adverse impact on the local economy. Economists roundly agree that exotic animal displays do not generate new economic spending in a region. They simply redistribute a family's discretionary spending because most households have an entertainment budget that will be spent in the local economy, whether it's on miniature golf, museums, a ball game, a movie, or a circus. Since the owners and others associated with traveling animal shows do not reside in the city of Delaware, when the show leaves town, most of the revenues leave with them.

The shifting tide of public opinion has prompted action from local governments and impelled many circuses to modify their shows.

I urge you to pass an ordinance prohibiting performing wild animals in circuses and traveling shows. Doing so will send a message that [municipality name] cares deeply about the humane treatment of animals. Thank you for considering this important issue.



BAN BULLHOOKS OR BAN ELEPHANTS

Good morning committee members. My name is [name] and I have lived in [city/county] for [#] years. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. I respectfully urge you to support [ordinance number], an act to prohibit the use of [bullhooks or elephants in traveling animal acts].

With all that is now known about the rich and varied lives that elephants naturally lead, it's become apparent that life in circuses or other traveling shows is nothing but misery for them. They are denied everything that is natural and important to them, are trained with punishment and pain, bullied to perform unnatural and silly tricks, and endure extreme confinement while chained in trucks and trailers during months of grueling travel each year.

Elephants don't perform confusing and often physically grueling circus tricks because they want to—they perform because they're afraid not to. They are conditioned through cruel behind-the-scenes training sessions to perform or suffer the painful consequences. Handlers use bullhooks to train, punish, and control elephants. A bullhook resembles a fireplace poker. It has a sharp metal hook and spiked tip that are used to prod, pull, hook, and strike elephants on the most sensitive areas of their bodies, often causing puncture wounds and lacerations. By their very design, bullhooks are intended to cause pain and fear.

Circuses easily get away with routine abuse because no government agency monitors training sessions, existing laws do not provide enough protection for elephants, and traveling circuses for the most part go virtually unchecked as they move quickly from one jurisdiction to another, making it difficult for anyone to monitor, report, or investigate abuses.

Using elephants in traveling shows also poses public safety risks. When an elephant rebels against a trainer's physical dominance, trainers cannot protect themselves, let alone the general

public. Elephants used to perform and give rides have rampaged, causing injuries to members of the public and injuring and killing handlers. Chaos has ensued when elephants bolted through parking lots, neighborhoods, and downtown streets, crashed through arena doors and plate glass windows, and collided with traffic. Two rampaging elephants – one who had been giving rides to children – were killed by police in a hailstorm of bullets.

People feel a strong connection to elephants because they exhibit characteristics that are so familiar to us: they have deep family bonds, show love for one another as well as happiness, grief and empathy, and suffer when they are deprived of what's natural to them. To be used in a circus they are taken from their mothers as babies and subjected to extreme confinement. A bullhook-wielding handler dictates their every move. It doesn't take a biologist to know that this is inhumane and as a result, the public has become increasingly opposed to the use of elephants in exhibitions. A growing number of states, counties, and cities have responded by passing legislation that addresses this issue.

Your support of this ordinance will send a powerful message that [municipality name] cares deeply about the humane treatment of animals. Thank you.

Talking Points

Here are a few general quick facts to help you prepare for meetings, media interviews, and other efforts to educate the public.

Laws protecting animals in traveling shows are inadequate and poorly enforced. The federal Animal Welfare Act establishes only minimum guidelines, and even these meager standards are often ignored. No government agency or humane society monitors training sessions, where abuse occurs behind the scenes. A growing number of local and state governments are filling the void left by insufficient federal oversight by passing stronger laws.

Animals used in traveling shows live a dismal life of domination, confinement, and violent training. It is standard practice to beat, shock, and whip them to make them perform ridiculous tricks that they cannot comprehend.

Animals used in traveling shows spend most of their lives in extreme confinement, depriving them of the ability to express natural behaviors.

Big cats, bears, and primates are forced to eat, drink, sleep, defecate, and urinate in the same cramped cages. Elephants often suffer crippling injuries from constant chaining and performing physically difficult tricks.

Animals in traveling shows are hauled around the country in poorly ventilated trailers for up to 50 weeks a year in all kinds of extreme weather conditions. Access to the basic necessities of food, water, exercise, and veterinary care is often inadequate.

Wild animals are dangerous and unpredictable and their use in traveling exhibitions puts the public at risk. There have been countless instances of tigers escaping from cages and elephants running amok and numerous children have been injured by wild animals used in circuses.

When animals rebel against a trainer's physical dominance, the animals sometimes pay with their

lives. Rampaging elephants have been gunned down in city streets, and caged tigers have been shot to death in retaliation for causing injuries.

In the wild, bears don't ride bicycles, tigers don't jump through fiery hoops, and elephants don't do handstands. Wild animal shows present a distorted view of wildlife.

There are many alternative forms of entertainment that are fun, exciting, and family-friendly that don't involve forcing abused animals to perform demeaning tricks.

Wildlife experts agree that the use of wild animals in traveling shows causes a great deal of suffering to animals who have specialized and complex needs that cannot be met in a traveling show.



FAQs

Why is legislation necessary?

Animals in circuses and other traveling shows suffer lives of unending misery, deprivation, and long-term confinement. They are trained with pain and punishment, bullied to perform unnatural and silly tricks, caged and chained in trains and trailers, and forced to endure months of grueling travel each year. Government documents confirm that wild animal shows and displays all too often have miserable records of animal care and commonly fail to comply with animal protection laws. Changing public attitudes about the use of performing wild animals is prompting citizens to call for legislation to prohibit wild animal acts.

How common/popular are circuses?

Animal-based circuses have been dwindling in popularity for decades, while contemporary circuses that dazzle crowds solely with skilled human performers, such as Cirque du Soleil, have soared. According to a November 2016 article in *Forbes* magazine, circus attendance in the United States has dropped an estimated 30 to 50 percent over the last 20 years and gross revenue from circuses in the U.S. fell almost 9 percent between 2007 and 2012.

When Ringling Bros. Circus eliminated elephant acts from its shows in 2016 and then, in 2017 announced the closing of the circus altogether, it acknowledged that changing public sentiment against the use of elephants in circuses and declining attendance over the past eight years was one of the factors behind those decisions.

What government agency monitors the training of performing animals?

No agency monitors the training of animals used for performances, yet training sessions are where the most severe abuse commonly occurs. A simple Internet search will produce numerous videos showing the true extent of the violence and abuse trainers inflict on elephants, big cats, and other animals during behind-the-scenes training sessions.

What government agency monitors the care and handling of performing animals?

Circuses and other traveling shows are regulated by the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which is enforced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). However, because the AWA establishes only minimum guidelines and fails to incorporate modern husbandry practices, a facility can be in compliance with the federal law, yet the animals can still be subjected to grossly inhumane conditions. And due to inadequate resources, the weak standards of the AWA are poorly enforced. In fact, even agency audits confirm that the USDA is unable to effectively enforce the law. To address deficiencies in the AWA, an increasing number of localities have passed legislation restricting the use of wild animals in circuses.

Where have restrictions on the use of performing wild animals been passed?

To date, more than [current tally of ordinances from HSUS factsheet] U.S. municipalities have passed legislation to restrict the use of wild animals or to prohibit cruel methods of training including: Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Oakland, California; Bergen County and Jersey City, New Jersey; Margate, Miami Beach, and Pompano Beach, Florida; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Richmond, Virginia; Missoula, Montana; Spokane, Washington; Austin, Texas; Union City and Fulton County, Georgia; and Clatsop County, Oregon. In addition, New Jersey and Hawaii prohibit wild animals in traveling shows, Illinois and New York ban the use of elephants in traveling shows, and the states of Rhode Island and California have enacted legislation banning the use of bullhooks on elephants.

How have circuses responded to laws that restrict the use of performing wild animals?

Although circuses may threaten not to perform in cities that consider laws prohibiting wild animal acts, it's been shown that many, in fact, choose to modify their shows. For example, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus said it would not perform in Los Angeles if the city banned

outdated elephant training tools yet, shortly after a ban passed, the circus announced that elephants would be removed from all its shows.

In 2018, Kelly Miller Circus decided it would not feature exotic animals in its shows and a year earlier, when Ramos Bros. Circus decided not to feature any animals except for a dog act, Oliver Ramos, general manager and CEO of the circus explained, "Times are changing. People were always concerned with the well-being of the animals and ... we didn't want that to be a burden on our show." Circus Vargas, which eliminated elephants, tigers and other exotic animals from its shows more than a decade ago (and also stopped featuring horse and dog acts in 2010), has seen its attendance numbers grow 3 to 6 percent over the past few years.

Numerous Shrine Circuses have eliminated wild animal acts altogether. The Wawa Shriners in Saskatchewan, Canada, recently featured a circus without exotic animals with their representative stating, "The last couple of years we have been concerned with the opinion of people and we're cognizant of that and feel the same. These animals weren't meant to be in that world..." Just months before the Minneapolis City Council voted unanimously to pass a measure prohibiting the use of bullhooks on elephants in traveling shows, Zurah Shriners CEO Ross Hjermstad said he believes using elephants, tigers, and lions in circuses will become a thing of the past, stating, "It's something that is going to be inevitable at some point. There is a growing trend to get away from those animals."

What about existing circus contracts?

As has been done in other municipalities, the implementation date of any proposed legislation can be adjusted to allow existing circus contracts to be fulfilled.

Won't money and jobs be lost if circuses no longer visit the city/county/state?

The proposed law will not have an adverse impact on the local economy. Wild animal

displays do not generate additional economic spending in a region. Families have a fixed amount of entertainment dollars that will be spent locally, whether it's on movies, museums, ball games, or a circus. Similarly, local jobs will not be affected because if circuses choose not to comply with the new law, the venues that previously hosted animal circuses will simply book other entertainment options. Further, before passing an ordinance banning cruel elephant training tools, the City of Los Angeles determined that all exhibitors using elephants combined, including Ringling Bros., appeared to have minimal impact on tax revenues and permit fees.

Don't Shrine Circuses raise funds to help sick children?

The Shriners Hospitals for Children is a separate entity from Shriners International. Shrine circuses are used as fundraisers to primarily benefit the local fraternal organizations of Shriners International.

According to a May 2016 Shriners *Temple Financial Manual*, "It is natural to associate the fez with Shriners Hospitals for Children. Because of this, meticulous attention must be given to all fundraising activities, including circuses, to make certain [...] that a contributor is not led to believe that his money will be used for the Hospitals when all or a portion thereof will be used otherwise." The same manual explains that "fundraising activities consisting of circuses, food sales, onion sales and other miscellaneous activities" support Temple activities while "fundraising events consisting of paper crusades donations, football games, golf tournaments and other miscellaneous events" are held for the benefit of Shriners Hospitals for Children.

Some Temples offer more transparency than others with regards to their circus fundraisers. A spokesperson for the Irem Shriners in Pennsylvania stated that proceeds from its 2017 circus "pay for all of our insurances, our uniforms and all expenses for things like our string band."

A poster for the El Zagal's 2018 Shrine Circus in North Dakota clearly states, "Proceeds from this Shrine Circus benefit Shrine Temple operations only." Similar disclaimers are published by numerous other Shriners advertising their circuses.

But in registering opposition to proposed bans on wild animals in traveling shows, the Anah Temple Shrine in Maine and the Syria Shrine in Pennsylvania in 2017 and 2018 respectively declined to provide circus fundraising tallies to support claims to reporters that ticket sales benefit the hospitals.

Regardless of any charitable purpose by civic or fraternal organizations, there are many alternative fundraisers available, such as carnivals, galas, auctions, golf tournaments, raffles, haunted houses, scavenger hunts, magic shows, life-like dinosaur shows, etc.

Why doesn't the legislation prohibit the use of domestic animals, such as dogs and horses, which are commonly used in circuses?

To date, public concern has focused on the use of wild animals in circuses because it's become apparent that species such as elephants, tigers, and bears, who are quite large and naturally active, are denied everything that is natural to them when they are forced to spend their lives in extreme confinement and are trained through pain and fear.

In addition, domestic animals do not pose the same level of danger to the public that wild species such as elephants and tigers do. A circus

environment may be less stressful to domestic animals since they are more acclimated to being around people. Local animal protection laws can likely better protect domestic animals used in traveling shows because law enforcement agencies are far more familiar with domestic species and therefore are better able to identify violations concerning the care of dogs or horses than wild species. And it is feasible to provide dogs or horses adequate opportunity to exercise during lengthy periods of travel.



Local animal protection laws can likely better protect domestic animals used in traveling shows.

Our Promise



We fight the big fights to end suffering for all animals.

Together with millions of supporters, we take on puppy mills, factory farms, trophy hunts, animal testing and other cruel industries. With our affiliates, we rescue and care for thousands of animals every year through our animal rescue team's work and other hands-on animal care services.

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For assistance, contact wildlife@humanesociety.org

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