



Undercover humane investigations- soon to be a crime in Minnesota?

April 7, 2011- Two bills have been introduced in the Minnesota Legislature that would make it a crime to videotape and show footage shot inside puppy and kitten mills and factory farms.

House File 1369 and Senate File 1118 would criminalize anyone blowing the whistle on animal cruelty, food safety problems, or labor abuses inside puppy and kitten mills or factory farms by making it a crime to take video inside such facilities, or even for the news media to possess or distribute these images. The bills also define all equine species as 'agricultural animals'. Once defined as such, they may not receive the greater protections afforded to 'companion animals' under Minnesota's cruelty statutes.

These bills are worded so broadly that they criminalize videotaping or audio recording of activities inside 'animal facilities'. An 'animal facility' includes farming operations, research facilities, veterinary offices, pounds or shelters, pet stores, and commercial kennels.

What are they trying to hide?

The free flow of information and ideas is essential to a free society. Stifling awareness and discussion does not make the problems of unsafe food or of animal cruelty and suffering go away. Legislators should focus on enacting animal welfare reforms, not on hiding what is occurring behind closed doors.

Currently, there are no state laws regulating the dog and cat breeding industry in Minnesota. Instead of taking serious steps to address this lack of regulation, some lawmakers are choosing to shield commercial dog and cat breeders from public scrutiny.

Responsible agriculture producers should welcome transparency regarding their animal welfare and food safety practices. Agriculture producers are ultimately responsible to the millions of consumers who buy their food, and they should not try to stifle public discussion and discourse on these practices.

Please take action today. Call Governor Dayton and your State Senator and State Representative and urge them to OPPOSE SF 1118 and HF 1369. Tell them that:

Undercover investigations protect the public- The public has an interest in knowing about consumer product safety violations. In states around the country, undercover investigations at farming and slaughter operations have revealed animal husbandry practices and conditions that threaten the safety of the food supply.

Undercover investigations protect animals from cruelty and suffering- The bills prohibit usage of one of the most important tools the humane community has to protect animals- exposing animal cruelty and suffering that goes on behind closed doors in Minnesota.

For more information, please visit Minnesota Voters for Animal Protection online:

www.votersforanimals.org