



2007 PRESIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: Barack Obama

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The President of the United States has a major impact on public policies that affect the lives of animals. The Animal Welfare Act, Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, Horse Protection Act, and a long list of other federal laws need proper enforcement if their original purposes are to be fulfilled. Executive agencies—including the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce—have wide-ranging authority over issues affecting pets, wildlife, farm animals, marine mammals, animals in research, and public lands. The President also shapes how Congress views new legislative proposals to protect animals from cruelty and abuse.

For more information on any of these issues, check the web sites of animal protection groups such as: www.hsus.org (The Humane Society of the United States), www.hslf.org (Humane Society Legislative Fund), www.humaneusa.org (Humane USA), www.farmsanctuary.org (Farm Sanctuary), www.aspca.org (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), www.ifaw.org (International Fund for Animal Welfare), www.saplonline.org (Society for Animal Protective Legislation), or www.ddal.org (Doris Day Animal League).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

What actions have you taken affecting the welfare of animals in the past? Please include actions taken at the local, state, or federal levels.

I have a long history of taking action in defense of the welfare of animals. As a state senator, I:

- voted to amend the Trusts and Trustees Act to allow the creation of trusts for domestic or pet animals;
- voted to amend the Humane Care for Animals Act to provide a penalty for a cruelty violation and mandates that the court shall order psychological treatment for anyone who is charged with this kind of violation;
- voted to amend the Humane Care for Animals Act to make taunting and tormenting a rescue dog a class b misdemeanor;
- voted to amend the Humane Care for Animals Act to create the offense of animal torture as a Class 4 felony, committed when a person inflicts extreme physical pain on an animal with the intent to increase or prolong the animal's pain, suffering, or agony and provides that a second

or subsequent offense is a Class 3 felony and provides that a person convicted of the offense shall be required to undergo psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment;

- voted to create new a dog fighting section in the criminal code that makes it illegal to, in any way, promote or facilitate dog fighting;
- voted to amend the Humane Care for Animals Act to increase the penalty for injuring a police animal (i) from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class 4 felony if the animal is not killed or totally disabled and (ii) from a Class 4 felony to a Class 3 felony if the animal is killed or totally disabled;
- voted to amend the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act of 1994 to require a licensee must report suspected acts of aggravated cruelty, torture, and animal fighting;
- voted to amend the Illinois Horse Meat Act to make it unlawful for any person to possess, to import into or export from the State, or to sell, buy, give away, hold, or accept any horse meat or any horse intended for slaughtering if that person knows or should know that any of the horse meat will be used for human consumption;
- voted to amend the Animal Welfare Act to require a notice regarding safe reptile handling practices are either prominently displayed or distributed to a purchaser of a reptile in a retail setting;
- cosponsored legislation that would have restored the prohibition on the commercial sale and slaughter of wild free-roaming horses and burros;
- voted to require distribution by veterinarians, pet shops, and other business entities that refer to a provider of cremation services, who undertakes to return the ashes of a cremated animal to its former owner, must certify that the services were properly performed and declare whether the ashes have been commingled with a significant amount of the ashes of other animals; and
- voted to provide that a deceased companion animal, which does not include livestock, that is delivered to a provider of companion animal cremation services subject to the Companion Animal Cremation Act is not waste for the purposes of the Environmental Protection Act, and that providing companion animal cremation services at a location does not make that location a waste management facility for the purposes of the Environmental Protection Act.

At the federal level, I am a co-sponsor of S. 311 on horse slaughter; of S. 261, the new animal fighting law to increase penalties for engaging in the activity; and S. 1880, to prohibit dog fighting and penalize spectators for engaging in the activity. I signed a letter requesting adequate funding for the Animal Care division of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and have sought funds to enforce the Animal Welfare Act, Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, and federal animal fighting law, as well as to establish a new veterinary student loan forgiveness program to encourage graduates to locate in underserved rural and inner-city areas and public health practices. I voted to require the Food and Drug Administration to update label standards for pet food and create a national registry or early warning system for adulterated food to report contamination to the Homeland Security Department.

In 2005 I voted for an amendment to stop horse slaughter by prohibiting the use of tax dollars to be spent on the inspections and approvals necessary to proceed with slaughter. I was also a cosponsor of the Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act (S. 382). In 2006, I wrote a letter to John Berry, Director of the Smithsonian National Zoological Park, in care of Maura Reidy in the Office of Government Relations, expressing concern for Toni the Elephant – his safety, treatment, and movement to a more accommodating zoo.

There is an important bond between people and animals. How should that bond impact federal policy?

Federal policy towards animals should respect the dignity of animals and their rightful place as co-habitants of our environment. We should strive to protect animals and their habitats and prevent animal cruelty, exploitation and neglect.

We also need to be respectful and supportive of the role pets play as companions. Nearly two-thirds of American families have pets. We must craft policies that honor those bonds and that respect that for most Americans, a pet is a member of the family.

Finally, we should encourage and support the role animals play in assisting humans, from search and rescue to aiding persons with disabilities. That means we need to support their trainers and the people they assist, and, most importantly, make sure that animals in human employ are well-treated. These animals should be honored like the heroes they are.

Are there any animal welfare programs or issues of importance to you that you would take the initiative on after you are elected?

I have consistently been a champion of animal-friendly legislation and policy and would continue to be so once elected. In particular, I've repeatedly voted to increase penalties for animal cruelty and violence and, importantly, to require psychological counseling for those who engage in this behavior as part of the punishment. In addition to being unacceptable in its own stead, violence towards animals is linked with violent behavior in general, especially domestic violence, and we need to acknowledge this connection and work to treat it. Strong penalties are important and I support them, but we know that incarceration alone can't solve all our problems. As president, I'd continue to make sure that we treat animal cruelty like the serious crime it is and address its connection to broader patterns of violence.

Do you have, or have you had in the past, any pets who have made an impact on you personally?

It's apparently been well-publicized that as a condition for letting me run for President, my daughters Malia and Sasha extracted a promise from Michelle and I that they could get a dog after the election, win or lose. So they're heavily invested in this campaign, if only for it to be over so we can get our dog.

EXECUTIVE AGENCIES AND FUNDING FOR ENFORCEMENT:

Animal Welfare Act: Over the past eight years, the President and Congress have increased annual funding for enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act by 89% (a cumulative total of about \$48 million in new dollars to the program). Today, there are 100 USDA inspectors, compared to about 60 inspectors during the 1990s, who ensure basic humane treatment at thousands of zoos, circuses, puppy mills, research laboratories, and other facilities.

Will you support continued funding for adequate enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act?

Yes No Not Sure

Humane Methods of Slaughter Act: Livestock such as cattle and pigs must be rendered insensible to pain before being slaughtered. The President and Congress have recently approved millions of dollars for the USDA to help ensure that animals at slaughter plants are not hung upside down, cut, scalded, skinned or dismembered while still conscious. This includes funding to implement a new system for tracking violations.

Will you support continued funding for adequate enforcement of the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act?

Yes No Not Sure

Animal Fighting: The President and Congress have recently allocated additional funds for USDA's Office of Inspector General – the department's chief law enforcement arm – to continue to work with state and local law enforcement to crack down on illegal dogfighting, cockfighting, and hog-dog fighting.

Will you support continued funding for adequate enforcement of the federal animal fighting laws?

Yes No Not Sure

Wildlife Conservation: The President and Congress have continued a steady increase in funding over recent years for programs that help protect critical wildlife habitat and prevent poaching around the world. Millions of dollars have been appropriated for the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, the African Elephant Conservation Act, the Indian Elephant Conservation Act, the Great Ape Conservation Act, the Marine Turtle Conservation Act, and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

Will you support continued funding for wildlife conservation and habitat protection programs?

Yes No Not Sure

Alternatives Development: Increased efforts are expected to direct greater funding for development and approval of alternative chemical testing methods that can reduce the use of animals in product testing. Such alternative methods for determining toxicity are often faster, cheaper, and more scientifically sophisticated than animal testing, leading to better results as well as less animal suffering.

Will you support funding for the research and development of alternatives to animal testing?

Yes No Not Sure

Lethal Predator Control: The USDA's Wildlife Services program kills 1.7 million animals each year as a government subsidy for private ranchers. Government agents use traps, poisons, aerial gunning, and other inhumane methods of killing coyotes, wolves, mountain lions, bears, and other predators – at the cost to taxpayers of about \$10 million annually.

Will you support a reduction in funding for lethal predator control, so that the USDA will shift its resources toward non-lethal management of predators when possible?

Yes No Not Sure

I would work to ensure that the Wildlife Services program completes its work in the most humane, environmentally sound way possible. That should include studying nonlethal management of predators. However, in the absence of Wildlife Services, ranchers would have to take on the responsibility for controlling predators on their own, with the potential for haphazard and dangerous application of poisons and traps, or overhunting of predators that are integral to Western ecosystems. While the actions of the Wildlife Service program certainly need oversight and improvement in areas where nonlethal methods may be more effective, the agency does have an important role in minimizing conflict between those who use our lands for their agricultural values and those who place a premium on wildlife habitat and wild lands.

Wild Horse Population Control: The Bureau of Land Management historically has rounded up wild horses from public lands in the West, and put them into government holding pens for long periods of time until they could be adopted or sold. There is a more humane and more cost-effective way to manage wild horse herds, which is the application of an immunocontraception vaccine called PZP.

Will you support funding for the BLM to use immunocontraception to manage wild horse herds?

Yes No Not Sure

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES:

The following issues are currently being debated in Congress. We'd like to know your position on these important animal welfare policies.

PETS AND CRUELTY

Pet Food Safety: Recent recalls of tainted pet food have shaken consumer confidence in the ability of the industry to ensure the health and safety of pet food. We need stronger regulations – for both human food and pet food – to ensure that standards are in place and the government has the ability to conduct inspections of foreign facilities and recall products immediately if needed.

Will you support legislation such as the Human and Pet Food Safety Act, S. 1274 and H.R. 2108, to help protect the food supply for people and pets?

Yes No Not Sure

Pet Trusts: Two-thirds of American households have pets, and most people consider dogs and cats a cherished part of their families. There are 39 states that allow pet owners to set up trust funds to provide long-term care for pets after the owner's death, but the federal tax code currently does not include such a provision.

Will you support legislation such as the Charitable Remainder Pet Trust Act, H.R. 2491, to allow the establishment of pet trusts?

Yes No Not Sure

Dogfighting: In May 2007, the President signed legislation upgrading the federal penalties for the interstate movement of animals for fighting purposes, from a misdemeanor to a felony. Tougher laws are needed to crack down on this cruel enterprise, which is often associated with drugs, firearms, violence, and high-stakes gambling. Dogfighting is illegal in all 50 states, but is still only a misdemeanor in two states. In some states, it is still legal to possess fighting dogs and legal to attend a dogfight. Banning spectators and possession will help law enforcement crack down on this organized crime.

Will you support legislation such as S. 1880, H.R. 3219, and H.R. 3327, which would make all dogfighting a federal felony with penalties up to five years in prison, and also ban possession of fighting dogs and being a spectator at a dogfight?

Yes No Not Sure

Puppy Mills and Imports: A loophole in current law exempts large-scale commercial pet breeders, known as "puppy mills," that sell directly to the public – over the Internet or through newspaper ads – from the minimum standards of care required by the Animal Welfare Act. Thousands of puppies are imported from other countries, and many become sick or die before making it to American pet stores.

Will you support legislation such as the Pet Animal Welfare Statute (PAWS) which would tighten the regulations concerning sale of puppies and kittens?

Yes No Not Sure

"Class B" Dealers: Some laboratories purchase dogs or cats from "Class B" dealers, who serve as middlemen between so-called "random sources" and the research facilities. Class B dealers are notorious for unsavory practices, such as stealing pets and acquiring animals from free-to-good-home ads under false pretenses. There are plenty of purpose-bred dogs and cats available for research, and the "random source" animals are not needed. There are only a handful of dealers who traffic in these pets, but the USDA spends more than \$250,000 each year on monitoring and enforcement.

Will you support legislation such as the Pet Safety and Protection Act, S. 714 and H.R. 1280, to prohibit the use in research of dogs and cats obtained from Class B dealers?

Yes No Not Sure

Antifreeze Safety: Every year numerous pets, wildlife, and even children are tragically poisoned because they are attracted to the sweet taste and bright color of antifreeze. These poisonings could be greatly reduced by including an inexpensive bittering agent in engine coolant and antifreeze.

Will you support legislation such as the Engine Coolant and Antifreeze Bittering Agent Act which would require the addition of a bittering agent to these sweet-tasting substances?

Yes No Not Sure

Horse Slaughter: The House and Senate have voted several times to stop the slaughter of American horses for human consumption, and the two states where horse slaughter plants were located – Texas and Illinois – both now have anti-horse slaughter laws on the books. Americans don't eat horsemeat and consider horses as pets rather than livestock, but our horses are killed for human consumption in France, Belgium, and other countries where horsemeat is a delicacy. American thoroughbreds, family ponies, and other horses are shipped over the border to Canada or Mexico for slaughter.

Will you support legislation such as the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act, S. 311 and H.R. 503, to institute a permanent ban on horse slaughter and exports of horses for human consumption?

Yes No Not Sure

FARM ANIMALS

“Downer” Livestock: Animals too sick or injured to stand or walk – “downers” – are often dragged with chains or pushed with bulldozers to slaughter. These animals also pose a danger to our food supply. After discovering that the first case of “mad cow disease” in the U.S. was found in a downed cow in 2003, the USDA passed a temporary ban on the processing of downed cattle for human consumption. In 2007, the USDA finalized the rule and made the ban permanent.

Will you support the current USDA ban as well as legislation such as the Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act, S. 394 and H.R. 661, to require the humane euthanasia of downer livestock and prohibit USDA certification of meat from such animals?

Yes No Not Sure

I support the current USDA ban. I also support the strengthening of federal policies to prevent animals exhibiting signs or symptoms of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies from entering into the human food chain.

Government Procurement: There is no federal law requiring humane treatment of animals on the farm. The federal government can take a leadership role by purchasing humanely raised food products for the military, school lunches, prisons, and other federal programs. Many producers are improving animal welfare by phasing out intensive confinement and other inhumane methods, and the government can help influence the market and encourage producers to improve animal welfare standards.

Will you support legislation such as the Farm Animal Stewardship Purchasing Act, H.R. 1726, to require that the federal government only purchase food from producers who meet certain humane standards?

Yes No Not Sure

I support strengthening standards and guidelines for the housing, transportation, slaughter, humane treatment and general welfare of animals in the United States.

Poultry Slaughter: Since the 1950s, federal law has required that animals be rendered insensible to pain before slaughter, but the USDA interprets this law to exclude poultry – 95% of all farm animals slaughtered for food, or nine billion animals a year. Chickens, turkeys, and other currently excluded species under the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act, should have this most basic humane protection.

Will you support USDA action or legislation to assure that poultry are rendered insensible to pain prior to being killed?

Yes No Not Sure

I support the strengthening USDA humane slaughter guidelines and standards for poultry.

Antibiotic Overuse: Large commercial agribusinesses dose farm animals with antibiotics so the animals can be raised in large numbers in overcrowded and inhumane factory farms. This is unhealthy for both animals and people, as it reduces the effectiveness of antibiotics for treating sick people and animals.

Will you support legislation such as the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act, S. 549 and H.R. 962, to phase out routine non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in farm animals?

Yes No Not Sure

I support stronger protocols, standards, and appropriate prohibitions for animal medicines to prevent disease-resistant strains or adverse health effects in humans.

WILDLIFE

Primates as Pets: While some states ban the private ownership of primates because the animals pose a safety threat and can transmit a variety of diseases to people, federal legislation is needed because the animals are traded across state lines and over the Internet. Often purchased as infants, primates can become aggressive as they age, and they often are not provided humane care. Recent high-profile incidents of captive primates attacking people emphasize the need for this legislation.

Will you support legislation such as the Captive Primate Safety Act, S. 1498 and H.R. 2964 to prohibit monkeys, chimpanzees, and other primates from being shipped across state lines for the pet trade?

Yes No Not Sure

Internet Hunting: Sportsmen and animal advocates were outraged in 2005 when a Texas entrepreneur launched a web site where clients can click a computer mouse to fire a remotely controlled rifle and bag exotic trophy animals stocked in fenced pens miles away. Thirty-four states – including Texas – have already banned Internet hunting, and federal legislation is needed to prevent this pay-per-view slaughter from occurring across state or national boundaries.

Will you support bills such as the Computer-Assisted Remote Hunting Act, H.R. 2711, to prohibit Internet hunting?

Yes No Not Sure

Canned Hunts: Even many hunting groups scorn the unsportsmanlike practice of “canned hunts,” where trapped animals have no chance of escape from fenced pens and patrons are often guaranteed to take home a trophy. Exotic animals are especially tame and may have come from zoos or circuses, ensuring hunters an easy target at these drive-thru killing operations.

Will you support legislation such as the Sportsmanship in Hunting Act to prohibit interstate and foreign commerce of captive exotic animals to be shot at “canned hunt” operations for entertainment or trophies?

Yes No Not Sure

Fur Labeling: A recent investigation found that leading designers and retailers were selling dog fur and raccoon dog fur falsely advertised as “faux” or falsely labeled as a different species of animal, such as raccoon, coyote, or rabbit. The Congress banned the sale of dog and cat fur in 2000, but loopholes in the law allow the sale of fur from raccoon dogs – a canine species killed in China by gruesome methods such as skinning alive – and do not require any labeling of fur-trimmed apparel if the fur is valued at \$150 or less, making it easy for dog fur to slip into the country unnoticed.

Will you support legislation such as the Dog and Cat Fur Prohibition Enforcement Act, H.R. 891, to close these loopholes and protect consumers?

Yes No Not Sure

Polar Bear Protection: The U.S. does not allow sport hunting of polar bears, but Canada allows hunting of these animals in the Arctic and most of the trophy hunters are Americans. Since 1972, American residents had not been allowed to import polar bear trophies (nor any other marine mammal parts) under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. In 1994, Congress bowed to trophy hunting interests and created a loophole that allows the importation of trophy heads and hides from Canada. Since then, more than 800 import permits have been issued. At a time when polar bears are facing threats from global warming and vanishing habitat, we should minimize human-caused forms of mortality such as trophy hunting.

Will you support legislation such as the Polar Bear Protection Act, S. 1406 and H.R. 2327, to restore the longstanding prohibition on imports of polar bear trophies?

Yes No Not Sure

Trade in Bear Parts: Poachers and profiteers are killing bears for their gall bladders and leaving the carcasses to rot, selling bear organs illicitly throughout the world and putting bear species at risk. Thirty-four states prohibit the sale of bear parts, but the patchwork of state laws make this underground trade difficult to enforce. A strong federal law is needed to protect bear populations from poaching.

Will you support legislation such as the Bear Protection Act, H.R. 3029, to prohibit the trade in bear parts?

Yes No Not Sure

Marine Mammals: Americans are concerned about the terrible cruelty of Canada's commercial seal hunt. The three-year quota set by the government allowed the slaughter of nearly one million seals, mostly pups as young as twelve days old. And tens of thousands of small cetaceans (such as dolphins, porpoises, and small whales) are cruelly slaughtered in

Japan's "drive fisheries," in which the animals are herded into a bay or onto shore and stabbed to death with spears or knives.

Will you support resolutions such as S. Res. 118 and H. Res. 427 calling on other nations to stop the slaughter of marine mammals?

Yes No Not Sure

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Thank you for your time. Please return the completed questionnaire to:

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