APPROPRIATIONS MATTERS

Congress holds the purse strings for federal agencies, including those of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), two agencies that address laboratory animal testing and alternatives. With this in mind, The HSUS has played a key role in reminding Congress of the importance of including specific language on alternatives in its appropriations bills.

Recently, former senators John Melcher and Paul Tsongas testified on behalf of The HSUS before congressional committees on NIH and EPA appropriations to discuss alternatives issues. Sen. Melcher, focusing on NIH, told Senate and House committees that adequate funding was critical to ensure laboratory compliance with the Animal Welfare Act amendments, including the Melcher amendment, which addresses the psychological well-being of chimpanzees. He also underscored the importance of NIH emphasis on alternatives. In Senate EPA appropriations hearings, Sen. Tsongas focused on the EPA's failure to meet a congressional mandate to be a leader in the alternatives issue and to provide the Congress with an annual report specifically outlining what it has done in alternatives research and development.

EFFORTS FOR ELEPHANTS

Rep. Frank Horton of New York has recently introduced H. Con. Res. 129, which expresses the sense of the Congress that the Secretary of the Interior should list the African elephant as an endangered species. Sen. George J. Mitchell of Maine introduced S. Con. Res. 75, which expresses the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of the Interior should list the African elephant as an endangered species. This rising groundswell in support of the African elephant reflects the importance and power of public pressure in achieving animal-protection victories.

WELCOME REINTRODUCTIONS

Rep. Barbara Boxer of California has reintroduced H.R. 1676. The Consumer Products Safe Testing Act would prohibit the use of the results of the painful LD-50 Test by federal agencies; phase out the Draize Eye-Irritancy Test; and require the use of non-animal toxicity tests by companies unless federal agencies found, in a specific situation, that only an animal test could be used to establish human safety.

The LD-50 is an inhumane and scientifically weak test which uses forty to two hundred animals per test, usually rats, mice, guinea pigs or, less frequently, rabbits, dogs, and primates. The goal is to determine how much of the substance will kill half the test group. The advancement of alternatives and clear evidence that alternatives are both more humane and better science make the continuation of the LD-50 Test unsupportable.

H.R. 1676 has been referred to the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment. Last year, the House bill had more than two hundred cosponsors. Although hearings were held, it did not make it out of committee.
Many rabbits would be spared the Draize Test under H.R. 1676.

This year, a similar bill has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada as S.891 and sent to the Senate Commerce Committee. It has not yet been referred to a subcommittee.

The HSUS has been lobbying legislators to move this bill and has met with key staff aides to discuss possible hearings. Please write your house and senate members, ask for their cosponsorship of the bill, and request house members to have House Health and the Environment Subcommittee chairman Henry Waxman move the bill out of subcommittee as quickly as possible. (Senate subcommittee hearings will also be very important, so contact senate members urging them to seek hearings as well.)

With growing concern over pesticides and toxic substances in cosmetics and food, the public deserves more emphasis on alternatives, which hold the key to better human health and can produce results quickly, at less cost, and more effectively than tests like the LD-50 and Draize.

NEW BILL ON VEAL

In June, the House Agriculture Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Subcommittee (Rep. Charles W. Stenholm, chairman), and the House Department Operations Subcommittee (Rep. George E. Brown, chairman) were scheduled to hold a hearing on H.R. 84, the Veal Calf Protection Act.

H.R. 84 specifically prescribes an expanded minimum space for a calf in an enclosure. It provides for an appropriate amount of physical contact and requires calf feed to include some solid food and meet certain USDA standards.

The HSUS supports H.R. 84 as providing minimal standards for calf rearing. HSUS Vice President Michael W. Fox was scheduled to testify in support of the bill on behalf of The HSUS.

Please write Rep. Charles W. Stenholm (1226 Longworth House Building, Washington, DC 20515) thanking him for his interest in a hearing on H.R. 84 and ask him to mark up the bill and report it to the House Agriculture Committee as soon as possible. Write your legislator and ask him or her to join with Rep. Bennett as a co-sponsor of the bill. Finally, write to Rep. Charles E. Bennett (2107 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515) thanking him for taking such a courageous step in introducing a bill to protect veal calves.

SUPPORT FOR REFUGES

Rep. Bill Green of New York recently reintroduced H.R. 1693, The Refuge Wildlife Protection Act of (now) 1989, which would prohibit killing wildlife for sport, recreation, or commercial purposes on national wildlife refuges. It would also establish clear guidelines that would have to be followed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for handling wildlife-management problems.

The HSUS is leading coalition efforts with a number of other groups, including the American Humane Association and the Massachusetts SPCA, to see this bill passed. You can help by requesting that House Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment Subcommittee chairman Gerry Studds (237 Cannon House Building, Washington, DC 20515) hold hearings on this key bill.

Please note: letters to senators should be addressed: The Honorable ____ , U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510. Letters to representatives should be addressed: The Honorable ____ , U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

THANK YOU

The HSUS extends its appreciation to the following members of Congress for their efforts on behalf of animals:

Rep. Barbara Boxer of California, for reintroducing the Consumer Products Safe Testing Act, which would prohibit the use of LD-50 Test results by federal agencies.

Rep. Charles E. Bennett of Florida, for reintroducing the Veal Calf Protection Act, to eliminate inhumane practices in the raising of veal calves.

Rep. Bill Green of New York, whose bill, the Refuge Wildlife Protection Act, seeks to restore the integrity of wildlife refuges by ending recreational hunting and trapping in such places.