

IN MARCH, WE RECEIVED THE GAME-CHANGING NEWS that Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, the nation's biggest and best-known circus, will retire all of its elephants to sanctuary by the end of 2018. The decision was a phenomenal victory for the animal protection movement and for the 13 elephants who will no longer travel the country in box cars and chains, forced to perform silly tricks. It was also a potent reminder of the power of our shared ideals. And it's a testament to resilience.

For decades, animal advocates had protested, litigated and lobbied against the circus' use of performing elephants—to little avail, it seemed. Then, in one bold stroke, the circus conceded. Ringling Bros. cited two main reasons for its decision: changing consumer attitudes toward elephants in captivity and local ordinances banning the use of bullhooks.

The outcome in this case is a reminder of the importance of sticking with the fight even in the face of adversity or stonewalling or even a seeming lack of progress. The power of our ideas, driven by a broad set of actions, will eventually wear down even the most stubborn and wealthiest of our adversaries and bring a better tomorrow for animals.

After the federal government wrongly removed Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves, a number of states authorized an appalling slaughter of these animals. We mobilized our litigation, legislation and scientific teams to counter their efforts. In 2014, we put two measures on the ballot in Michigan—one to stop the hunting of wolves and another to keep the state from reversing that decision—and won both in commanding fashion. Then we helped secure two important court rulings, halting the killing of wolves in Wyoming and the Great Lakes region.

We're now fighting efforts in Congress to override those court rulings. You can rest assured that your HSUS will keep pushing from every angle to prevent a resumption of the trophy hunting and trapping of wolves.

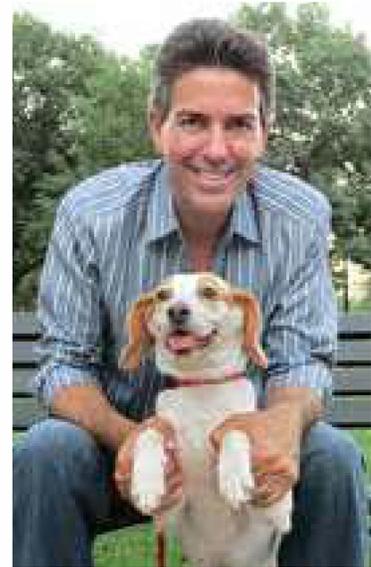
The battle to stop the slaughter of horses on American soil has required unwavering attention. In 2013, when several horse slaughterhouses threatened to open here for the first time in several years, we went to court to stop them. We held them off there while we secured language in Congress to block funding for inspections of horse slaughtering facilities, preventing the plants from opening.

At the same time, we're campaigning to stop the export of American horses to Canada and Mexico for slaughter. We presented European Union authorities with evidence of cruelty and the administering of illegal substances to horses, and late last year, that key market for horsemeat halted any imports from Mexico.

Two years ago, we launched an effort in Congress to get hens out of extreme confinement. We negotiated a sweeping animal welfare reform with the egg industry, only for the beef and pork industries to block its passage. These groups want no federal standards for farm animal welfare, and they were willing to undercut egg producers in their quest to have a workable set of national rules.

But we've not yielded and have continued to work through other channels. Recently, Nestle (the world's largest food seller) and Starbucks pledged to go 100 percent cage-free in their egg supply after consultations with us. And the nation's three largest food service companies—Aramark, Compass Group and Sodexo, which collectively buy nearly a billion eggs a year—followed suit.

We plan to continue these fights and bring a determined attitude to our other campaigns—to end the dog meat trade in South Korea, commercial sealing in Canada, cosmetic testing on animals throughout the world and so much more. That's what you get with The HSUS: a group that will tackle the worst abuses of animals, conducted by the biggest and most powerful industries, from every angle until we turn around these problems. In the face of these challenges, we all need to show resiliency, because so many vulnerable lives depend on our unrelenting efforts.



Wayne Pacelle with his adopted dog, Lily.

Wayne Pacelle

Wayne Pacelle, President & CEO
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