

Castle Promotes Animal Rights Protection with DE Humane Shelter Animals by His Side -- August 1, 2006

Wilmington, DE -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle visited the Delaware Humane Association shelter today in Wilmington to discuss pending pieces of legislation designed to protect animal rights and prevent cruelty to animals. After speaking, the Congressman took a tour of the shelter to interact first-hand with the animals.

"It is great to be surrounded by dedicated supporters of an important cause, to discuss critical legislation that can help our animal friends, some of whom are here today. Every one of these bills serves an important purpose and I will work to try to get them passed in Washington. Some animals have become our companions, some play important roles in sensitive ecosystems, and some are raised for food. No matter what their role, it is our duty to protect and care for each and every one of them," Castle said.

Brief summaries of each piece of legislation discussed is outlined below: In addition to being a cosponsor on these bills, the Congressman has signed letters in support of increased funding for the federal Humane Methods of Slaughter Act and the Animal Welfare Act, which have provided solid protections to animals for many years. Funding for enforcement of these laws is critical.

1) Animal Fighting Prohibition Enforcement Act (HR 817)

The bill, introduced by Reps. Green and Bartlett, would establish a felony-level penalty for violations of the federal law dealing with dogfighting, cockfighting, and other animal fighting ventures, and to ban interstate/foreign commerce in cockfighting implements.

2) Pet Animal Welfare Statute (PAWS) of 2005 (HR 2669)

The bill, introduced by Reps. Gerlach and Farr, would extend animal welfare protections to puppies and kittens bred by large commercial operations and sold over the Internet or newspaper ads, and make other strengthening changes in the Animal Welfare Act.

3) Downed Animal Protection Act (HR 3931)

The bill, introduced by Reps. Ackerman and LaTourette, would prohibit USDA certification of meat from livestock too sick or injured to walk unassisted. This would codify USDA's administrative ban on downed cattle in human food, and expand it to include other species such as downed pigs and sheep, which also pose heightened public health risks and suffer when dragged, hauled by bulldozer, or otherwise moved.

4) Horse Protection Act (HR 503)

The bill, introduced by Rep. Sweeney, would amend the Horse Protection Act to make it a crime to transport, sell or buy horses with the intent of killing them for human consumption. Horse meat, while not widely eaten in the US, is a delicacy in parts of Europe.

5) Antifreeze Bittering Act (H.R. 2567)

The bill, introduced by Rep. Ackerman, would amend the Federal Hazardous Substances Act to require engine coolant and antifreeze to contain a bittering agent in order to render the coolant or antifreeze unpalatable to animals and children.

6) Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act (H.R. 3858)

The bill, sponsored by Reps. Lantos and Shays, which overwhelmingly passed the House in May of this year, would require state and local preparedness groups to include plans for evacuation of pet owners, pets and service animals in the event of a major disaster.