



LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING & LOBBYING COMPETITION

2012 PROBLEM

*DO NOT RISK DISQUALIFICATION! COMPETITORS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO RECEIVE ANY HELP ON THE PROBLEM BEFORE THEIR BILL AND FACT SHEET IS SUBMITTED (DUE FEBRUARY 1, 2012). PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE, COMPETITORS MAY NOT DISCUSS THE PROBLEM WITH ANYONE, INCLUDING PROFESSORS, COACHES, STUDENTS, COLLEAGUES, OR ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL.

You just landed a new job as a policy specialist for Wild Animal Freedom Association (WAFA), a national coalition of more than one million individual and organizational members from across the country. Your group is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a separate 501(c)(4) arm formed to be able to conduct electioneering activity. WAFA originated as a program (Wild Animal Freedom Project) of a large national organization (the Allied Animal Society), and spun off to create its own non-profit organization in 2004. WAFA still maintains a close working relationship with Allied Animal Society (AAS). AAS operates many companion animal shelters and wild animal sanctuaries across the country.

The board of WAFA is made up of many recognized experts and professionals with experience with wild animals, including veterinarians, behaviorists, and ethologists. Staffers and some board members have years of experience caring for animals in sanctuaries. Many of these animals need special care after years of travel and performing. You have some notable names on your board, ranging from primatologist June Goodstuff to ex-circus employee Ron Tryder. While WAFA is headquartered in Washington DC, there are regional offices in several parts of the country, including Boston and Florida, where the AAS also has offices.

One of the reasons WAFA formed its own non-profit was to be able to focus solely on the issue of wild animals performing in traveling acts. Your group started with education efforts, including rallies and protests, but has gradually evolved to focus more on changing public policies and working to elect animal-friendly legislators (through the 501(c)(4)). WAFA has worked mostly on state and local legislation and has had mixed results.

Staff and board members have varying thoughts on the best way to focus efforts. Some want to continue to devote resources to passing local and state laws to prohibit traveling acts with performing wild animals, with the goal of gaining ground support and success in key legislative districts. Others believe that this will take too long and that WAFA's focus should be to pass a bill that would prevent certain practices (such as the use of the bullhook) that are particularly barbaric and to put other limitations on the use of wild animals in traveling circuses nationwide.

At the last board meeting, the decision was made to pursue a federal bill.

You are instructed to:

1. Draft a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act, Endangered Species Act, and/or any other suitable statutes to better protect wild animals in traveling acts and/or limit the ability for these shows to obtain wild animals. These amendments should also ensure such provisions are enforceable.
2. Create a fact sheet for your bill; and
3. Approach members for their sponsorship, co-sponsorship, and their votes.

Your bill number as designated by Congress is H.R. 100

Read the official competition rules for further details.

LOBBYING ROUND #1

You have drafted the bill, run it by various other stakeholders, and are now ready to find a sponsor. After conducting research and strategizing, you decide to ask Representative Bleating to sponsor your bill. This is the goal of this meeting.

REPRESENTATIVE WILL BLEATING (D-MA)

Representative Bleating represents a district that is suburban, with some urban areas. He is a Democrat and had a good pro-animal record when he was a state legislator. He mostly voted in favor of animal protection bills, including legislation to put restrictions on body-gripping traps and another to phase out Greyhound racing. He has several very active members of your organization in his district, like Chip Copper and Marlene Sierra, actors and activists who know him well from his time as a state legislator; they are also active in local democratic politics. He has not sponsored any federal animal protection bills yet.

Four municipalities in his district have local bans that prohibit wild animal circuses from performing within the city or town borders. Years ago, Representative Bleating served as a city councilor in one of these cities and voted to support the ban, though he remembers how controversial the issue became. Immediately prior to his election, he was a district attorney. During his time in the D.A.'s office, he personally handled several animal abuse and neglect cases and was somewhat known as the "go to" person for animal cases.

He went to the circus as a child and, at the time, enjoyed being up close to animals. As an adult, he took his younger daughter, then five, to a circus with wild animals, but it didn't seem right to him and that was his last visit. He now mostly goes to concerts and Cirque Du Soleil for entertainment. A decade ago, he met a constituent, Bob McKie, at his local gym and they struck up a friendship. Bob cares deeply about this issue (a passion sparked by a trip to Africa where he saw elephants and other animals in their natural habitats) and took every opportunity to influence the then-councilor that these animals should not be performing. In addition to the humane issues, the Representative also became concerned about the dangers, both to the public and to animals, associated with the transporting and keeping of these animals.

One of AAS's companion animal shelters is in his district. It is the largest of any of the organization's facilities and is frequently used by AAS and state police to house animals from local seizure and hoarding cases, including some animals from roadside zoos.

Representative Bleating is currently chair of the Financial Services committee. You went to law school with Representative Bleating's Chief of Staff and she mentioned one late night during the debt ceiling debate that she thinks he would be interested in sponsoring this type of bill and working it through the process. She mentioned that given the current political climate Representative Bleating will want this to be a bipartisan issue and wants support from both sides of the aisle.

LOBBYING ROUND #2

You are meeting with Representative Alex Murphy to co-sponsor your bill. At this time, the Wild Animal Cruelty Prevention Act has been introduced and you now have 82 co-sponsors in the House and 22 in the Senate. You understand that you need to continue to build your co-sponsor list with key members to get the bill ready for a committee hearing and, hopefully, floor action.

REPRESENTATIVE ALEX MURPHY (R-FL)

Representative Murphy is a moderate Republican with a fairly rural district with a few suburban pockets. The neighboring county, though not in her district, is home to a training center for a major circus. She is a frequent recipient of their materials promoting conservation and has received some donations from them over the years. One of their lobbyists recently ran into her on the elevator in the Capitol and started to talk about their growing concerns about animal rights activists taping what happens at the training property and using those images “out of context” to try to “get them” on cruelty charges and make them look bad in the media. This was likely as a result of a piece by one of the Florida news stations that did an exposé with some footage of trainers with bullhooks in their sleeves who would strike the elephants during their annual parade from the train to the performance venue.

The Representative also occasionally hears from a local charity that uses a circus as a fundraiser. They stress to her that the economic impact from this loss of revenue would be difficult, both to their organization and to the surrounding businesses (restaurants, arenas, etc.) that get additional patrons when the circus is in town. A developer and restaurateur, Steven Teal, in her district is one of your major donors. He has a dog, Marty, who performs a balloon trick at your fundraisers. Mr. Teal supports a wide variety of candidates and does so in a bipartisan manner.

Representative Murphy has pictures of her family in her office and almost all of them include her dogs. You noticed in her recent Twitter feed that she recently attended the local animal shelter’s grand reopening. She also followed you on Twitter back when you started to follow her. In the past she has sometimes agreed to help out AAS “behind the scenes” on some companion animal issues, but doesn’t want to be the face of your issues.

There are rumors that the senior senator in Florida is ill and will not pursue another term. Representative Murphy is interested in this seat, and, as she puts together her campaign team, is being advised not to take on controversial issues right now when she can avoid them. She doesn’t want to create any unnecessary criticism that could interfere with this goal. She frequently appears on Sunday morning talk shows and recently spent several minutes talking about how the market – not legislators - should decide whether or not Greyhound racing ends in Florida.

You recently approached the Florida state veterinarian within the division of non-game species and she has given you a sense that they will support this, though she still needs to get official permission from her agency. You’ve also been able to get a few letters from zoo directors, but not from the national zoological association. You hope that this might be helpful when you meet with the Representative.

LOBBYING ROUND #3

You are meeting with Representative Fred Tukas, the Chair of the House Agriculture Committee, to request a hearing and a mark-up (a vote) for your bill. At this stage, your bill has been introduced and has 115 co-sponsors in the House and 29 in the Senate, but has not had a hearing or a mark-up yet.

REPRESENTATIVE FRED TUKAS (R-AL)

The Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee is a known adversary of animal protection issues. Several years ago, AAS tried to work with him on an issue relating to the havoc caused from a tornado in his district and sheltering impacted animals – where you might find common ground – but it didn't seem to gain them much trust.

He has negatively called your fact sheets “propaganda” and has implied that your group lies about issues. He is generally offended by people and groups that seek to “threaten tradition.” If anything is ever said to question USDA's effectiveness, he becomes immediately defensive, defining them as the sole experts and saying that other points of view or critiques are based on emotion. Despite his dislike of animal protection groups' missions, you still get invitations to his fundraisers, often in the form of a “pig roast” or “turkey fry.”

His rural Alabama district is one where, due to lots of grassroots outreach, WAFA has hundreds of members. Some of these members have become very active and, with your group's help, have gained the favorable attention of the local newspaper (the editor of the *Birmingham Tribune* personally met with you and several members for over two hours, much of that time consumed with tales of his travels on safaris and showing you photos of the animals he and his wife were able to see).

Chairman Tukas recently cited the Circus Fans of America when a reporter asked him about your organization's current effort. He has been known to argue that any improvement in animal welfare is part of a slippery slope to make the country vegan.

You are well aware, given his past hostilities toward your organization that this meeting will be difficult, but you hope to neutralize his concerns enough that he will allow the bill to pass, even if you cannot win his support. While he and Representative Bleating have differing views, they are fairly good friends, so you have hope he will be interested in helping the bill for friendship's sake, if not for his own reasons. Additionally, Chairman Tukas has long been pushing a bill of importance to a constituent group that seeks to provide legal certainty for coin collectors that they may buy, own, or sell these coins without the threat of government seizure. This bill was sent to the Committee on Financial Services, of which Representative Bleating has recently become chairman.