



Arizona Legislative Candidate Questionnaire 2012

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Animals play an important role in the lives of many Arizonans, who consistently demonstrate concern for animal protection. Humane-minded citizens of all political stripes care deeply about the positions their elected officials take on animal protection issues. Humane Voters of Arizona (HVA) appreciates your input on this 2012 State Candidate Questionnaire. HVA will be endorsing candidates for the upcoming primary and general elections based upon voting records and response to this questionnaire. HVA may also share questionnaire responses with other organizations that track and make endorsements.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Have you ever been involved in any animal protection issues?

Yes No Comments

I have two children – a son and daughter. My son always was afraid of dogs and once locked himself in the car because he was frightened of a dog running down the street! That was a cause of concern for me and I hoped he would get over his fear. I had been playing with the idea of getting a dog as a family pet, hoping that would help him conquer his fear. When my son was about four, he was playing outside with his sister. I heard hoots of laughter followed by Michael at the door asking me for some water. I did not know what he was talking about until I saw a beautiful young dog (half golden retriever) run up to him and give him a big lick on his legs. Michael let out a huge laugh! At last, he lost his fear and he put his arms around the dog's neck. This was our introduction to Goldie. At first we thought Goldie was a stray and I phoned all over to try and locate a possible owner. Then, on advice, I took her to the vet. She had a bad case of heart worm. The vet told me the owner had probably abandoned her since it is very costly to cure this illness which results in a horrible death. I had no choice and we had Goldie successfully treated. We all loved Goldie – she was a wonderful pet. Goldie taught my son how to love and not be fearful of dogs.

Many years later, my daughter, who has always loved animals, developed a way of picking up lost and abandoned dogs. Many times I was left with looking after an abandoned dog until we found a permanent home for it. Although she is married now, my daughter continued to help to save many stray dogs while she lived in Pueblo, CO. It was fortunate that her next neighbor worked for a vet and could help out!

Do you have, or have you had in the past, any companion animals that have had an impact on you?

Yes No Comments

Apart from Goldie (see above) we had a Chihuahua named Rikki. He was the runt of a litter of puppies born to two of my friend's dogs. I had recently become separated from my husband and Rikki helped to fill the void that was left. It was just the three of us – my two children and me. Rikki quickly became a part of our small family. My children developed a protective love of Rikki and he went with us everywhere. We would take him for walks on a leash designed for a cat! He lived with us for 16 years. And yes, he had a very strong impact on us. He helped get us over a very difficult part of our family life and move on.

Do you financially or philosophically support any local or national animal protection organizations? If so, which ones?

Yes No Comments

I am an active member of The Sierra Club and donate financially to the organization. I donate to The Nature Conservancy. I philosophically support our local Animal Shelter here in Sedona, which does an amazing job looking after animals. While I lived in Colorado, I volunteered for the Friends of the Zoo in Denver.

ANIMAL CONTROL

ROADSIDE ANIMAL SALES

In 2008 the Arizona Legislature passed a bill prohibiting the public sale of animals, but the law applies only to counties with a population of more than 800,000. Yet animal control agencies and shelters in smaller counties report that unregulated public sale of animals is a significant burden for shelters, animals, and communities. Many animals sold on public streets are bred and raised in poor conditions. And since the animals are typically not spayed, neutered or vaccinated, they contribute to overpopulation, the euthanasia of thousands of homeless animals each year in Arizona shelters and the spread of disease. Roadside animal sales also increase costs of animal control, which places a financial burden on taxpayers.

Would you support legislation to expand the ban the roadside sale of animals statewide?

Yes No Comments

I will support legislation to expand the ban statewide. Legislative District 6 is comprised of parts of four counties; Coconino (population 134,511), Navajo (population 107, 398), Gila (population 53,144), and Yavapai (population 211,888). According to the way the law was written, it would apply in none of these counties and, by extension, nowhere in LD6. This is a travesty. Our animal shelters are filled to overflowing. Thousands of pet-quality animals are put down each year in our district. We must do all that we can to prevent this needless heartache. Banning roadside sales is a logical and easily implemented first step. Then we must educate the public and follow up with well-designed, low-cost spay/neuter programs in all parts of Arizona.

HOMELESS ANIMALS

Every year, tens of thousands of cats and dogs are killed in shelters throughout Arizona. Taxpayers bear the cost of picking up, housing, and ultimately euthanizing these homeless or unwanted animals. The pet overpopulation crisis is the direct result of irresponsible breeding and animals left unaltered in our communities.

Would you be willing to work with animal control agencies and/or shelters in your district to address problems related to the homeless animal crisis?

Yes No Comments

Yes, I will work with the appropriate agencies to address this issue. Again, it is heartbreaking to realize just how many cats and dogs are euthanized each year because owners fail to have their pets spayed or neutered.

WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

ARIZONA GAME & FISH COMMISSION

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission (AZGFC) is charged with managing and protecting Arizona's wildlife. It has five members who are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Arizona Senate. Each serves a five-year term, no two may be from the same county and only three may be members of the same political party. Each candidate must be well-informed on the subject of wildlife.

For decades, Arizona has had an appointment process through which applicants would apply directly to the governor's office. However, in 2009 the Arizona Legislature passed SB 1200, a measure that creates a recommendation board controlled by ranchers and clubs who represent less than 1% of Arizona hunters and anglers to appoint candidates to the AZGFC. The governor is required to select only board-endorsed candidates.

SB 1200 was opposed by the AZGFC and many diverse hunting, conservation, and animal protection organizations.

Do you support a process that includes less than 1% of hunters & anglers and limits the voice of a majority of Arizonans to control of the Arizona Game & Fish Commission appointment process?

Yes No Comments

I find it difficult to comprehend why the Legislature altered the original, successful selection process to favor select groups with obvious vested interests in wildlife and its protection (or lack thereof).

Do you believe that SB 1200 should be repealed?

Yes No Comments

Arizona's wildlife deserves all the protection Fish and Game can legally provide. Such decisions should never "belong to" or be relegated to a select group with obvious vested interests.

EXOTIC ANIMALS

Although the Arizona Game and Fish Department requires a license to possess great apes (chimpanzees, gorillas, orangutans), there are no restrictions for owning the majority of dangerous primates. Monkeys, baboons, and other primates kept as pets can inflict serious injuries or even kill their owners or neighbors, and can transmit deadly diseases to people, such as hepatitis A, tuberculosis and the often fatal Herpes B virus.

Would you support legislation that would ban the private possession of all primates in Arizona?

Yes_√____ No____ Comments

The law should be expanded to cover all primates. I believe most Arizonans would agree the disease component needs to be addressed. Here private wishes must be trumped by the greater good. Government has a duty to prevent outbreaks of harmful and potentially deadly diseases among Arizona's population.

CITIZENS' VOTING RIGHTS

Arizona's public initiative process is a constitutional right which was enacted at statehood in 1912. The first initiative was for women's suffrage, and it passed by a margin of greater than two to one that same year.

Arguably the most important tool for protecting Arizona's animals is the public initiative process. Thanks to grassroots citizens' ballot measures, cruel leg-hold traps were banned on public lands in 1994 and cockfighting was outlawed in 1998. In 2006, voters overwhelmingly approved an initiative that banned the cruel confinement of pregnant pigs and calves raised for veal.

In 2000 voters rejected a proposal that would have required a 2/3 majority to pass any initiative affecting wildlife. And in a landslide election in 2008, voters defeated a measure that would have deprived the majority of voters participating in an election of the right to decide ballot initiatives, virtually eliminating the citizen initiative process.

Do you support Arizona's public initiative process?

Yes_√____ No____ Comments

Do you believe that the Legislature should NOT attempt to dismantle the constitutional voting rights of Arizona citizens?

Yes_√____ No____ Comments

The constitutional voting rights of our citizens need to be protected at all costs. The initiative process places issues before the voting public that the Legislature itself often refuses to address or to which the Legislature is openly hostile. This is especially true when the Legislature is overwhelmingly dominated by one party, a situation we currently face. Disabling the public initiative process destroys voters' ability to affect issues they care deeply about. The public initiative process is one of the most democratic processes we have left in our very complex system of government.

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

Humane Voters of Arizona

Email to: HumaneVotersArizona@cox.net