

‘Humane Education’: Why it is not the right thing to do

Animal rights (AR) groups led by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Peta and the Institute of Humane Education (IHE) are campaigning across the US to implement what they refer to as “humane education” a program of extreme ideological material they aspire to teach in our school systems. They have been successful in a few cities, but up to now have not been successful at the state or federal levels, despite repeated efforts to introduce legislation.

One such effort briefly succeeded in a California school system and some of this “education” did take place. The approach was to show a movie involving animals, such as *Finding Nemo*, immediately followed by a discussion focused on how cruel it is to eat fish. Parents were angered when their children came home declaring they could no longer eat meat or fish.

While it is important that future generations are taught the importance of respecting and caring for animals, both wild and domesticated, we should not allow extremist animal rights groups to dictate information children will be exposed to. Emotional, subliminal vegan messages replacing animal care based on accepted, proven animal husbandry practices is not education, but indoctrination. As our world has become more urbanized and families further removed from the farm and the land, people are more disconnected—and less knowledgeable—about what is considered the proper care of animals by humans.

As animal owners, farmers and horse and dog breeders, we are the targets of animal rights legislation that would criminalize our traditional relationship with animals. We must become pro-active. This must be a concerted effort to expose the hypocrisy, lies and misinformation the animal rights activists preach. We are joining with a number of other animal rights targets to mount a nationwide campaign to educate our legislators and the public on the dangers of what appears on the surface as harmless legislation. It must be stopped before it becomes embedded in our schools. This is a call to action to stay vigilant and not allow vegan biased “humane education” into our schools.

We believe in **animal welfare**, not animal rights. There’s a big difference: Animal welfare concerns the prevention of suffering and cruelty to animals; whereas animal rights philosophy advocates an end to all “human use of animals, considering such use “exploitation” of animals. Animal rights activists have gone so far as trying to equate what they call speciesism (“*a prejudice or bias in favor of the interests of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species.*”) with racism.

We are dedicated to the care and well-being of animals and believe in their humane and respectful treatment, however we are opposed to the concept of animal rights. We believe human societies requires and accepts the use of animals as sources of food and fiber, as well as for scientific research, sport, entertainment and clothing. We live with and love animals while we also eat and wear animal products. We believe animals are good for humans both physically and mentally, and that we need not be ashamed of, nor have to justify human use of animals.

The education-related web pages of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) (<http://www.aspcapro.org/service-learning.php>), the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) (http://www.humanesociety.org/parents_educators/) and the Institute for Humane Education (IHE) (<http://humaneeducation.org/home/how-ihe-helps-educators/>) reveal opposition to many lawful, human activities involving animals: animal agriculture; biomedical research; the use of animals for entertainment or sport including circuses, dog and horse shows and racing, mushing, rodeos, fishing, and hunting; wearing leather and generally any activity that uses animals to benefit humans. All these websites project the message

that eating meat, dairy products and fish is cruel and a vegan life style is the answer to ending the suffering of billions of farm animals.

Whatever one's personal beliefs regarding the roles of animals in human society, they are views best developed through assimilation of family and community values and adult life experience. Politically charged philosophies regarding the use of animals should not be involuntarily forced upon children and families through indoctrination by organizations with extreme agendas that are incompatible with mainstream American values. These organizations should not have unfettered access to impressionable children.

Further, we should not permit our youth to be indoctrinated with a negative view of ethnic or regional cultures. For example, the indigenous peoples of Alaska and other Native Americans hunt and trap animals for food. We should not foster intolerance of their cultures on the part of impressionable youth. Instead our children should be taught to understand and respect fully the diversity of the American experience, its history and its mix of highly varied cultures across the full spectrum of our society. "Humane Education" as its protagonists would teach it would do just the opposite.

Though it may seem unlikely that we as animal lovers and welfare advocates would oppose proposals to teach "humane education" to children, when the intentions of animal rights organizations are revealed, it's clear why we are taking this stand. We believe decisions about the use of animals should be made with respect for the dignity of human and animal life, and where appropriate, by applying science, rather than emotion to decision-making about our society's treatment of animals. So-called "humane education" represents an effort to indoctrinate youth in the ideology of animal extremism and should be rejected.

We need your help. As extremist animal rights activist organizations ramp up their campaign for "humane education," please notify us if you see this legislation surface in your community or state. And please help us educate legislators and school boards about the underlying messages and intent. Let them know that you support the humane treatment of animals, but not the animal rights extremism embodied in "humane education."

Thank you.