

The “Killing With Kindness” Campaign – An Act of Compassion
Please support a U.S. FEDERAL law for the *humane* euthanasia
of surplus, homeless companion animals!
(<http://www.crean.com/kindness>)

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Federal, State and Local Governments, Members of the Media and Animal-Related Organizations:

Millions of abandoned animals in America’s shelters are crying out for justice and compassion. Our great nation is home to a cruel mass murder supported by taxpayers and condoned by officials at all levels of government. The media and animal-protection groups have repeatedly informed us about these horrors and the fact that they occur is undeniable. (Reference links available at the above website.)

We have shelters and pounds in America where animals are placed in metal or wood boxes or used oil drums, and hot, lung-searing (or sometimes pre-cooled) carbon monoxide fumes are pumped in; or they are suffocated with carbon dioxide; or they are placed in decompression chambers; or given painful lethal injections jabbed directly into the heart; or placed in freezers while still alive; or they are drowned, or shot, or electrocuted. Some are dragged clawing and screaming to their deaths. Some are kicked and choked on the way to the killing. When multiple animals are gassed together, they injure themselves and each other in their terror. These horrors have often been documented, and some local groups and governments have been successful in eradicating these cruel practices. However, these practices are so epidemic that it could take decades to purge them with local or state-by-state efforts.

The “Killing With Kindness” campaign demands one U.S. federal law: *That all animal species housed in any shelter/pound/animal control facility shall be euthanized, only when necessary, by a veterinarian or trained, certified euthanasia technician, and that the animal shall first be sedated/tranquilized (when advisable) before being administered a lethal intravenous injection of sodium pentobarbital.*

We know that “euthanasia” is the appropriate term when we must put down an animal due to old age or illness. We have further allowed “euthanasia” to become a euphemism for annually killing millions of young, healthy, adoptable animals, many of them purebred. By the time the animals are delivered to a shelter, they are already victims of human irresponsibility and lack of compassion. For those of us involved in America’s shelters and animal rescue efforts, humane education and advocacy campaigns, spay/neuter programs, and other efforts, we have exhausted and bankrupted ourselves, financially and emotionally, in trying to reduce the killing.

That animals are sentient beings who feel pain, experience fear and trauma, and suffer terribly from abuse and neglect is well documented in scientific and legal literature. Philosophical and legal battles are waged over “animal welfare” and “animal rights,” their issues and solutions. However, “welfare” implies how we house and care for animals and “rights” entails how animals are regarded and what they should be entitled to legally, morally, or ethically.

The “Killing With Kindness” campaign cannot be dismissed as just “animal welfare” or “animal rights.” It cannot guarantee a suitable life for companion animals; it speaks to their deaths and how they should die, if we persist in killing them. It goes beyond the animals and addresses one of the worst examples ever of our inhumanity and the lessons we teach our children. It does not place animals above people – it is people who must perform the killing and work in environments where the killing is conducted (the potential risk to workers who perform the gassing has been documented, as well as the

emotional effects on workers). As Gandhi said, “*A nation and its moral progress can be judged by the manner in which its animals are treated.*”

The “Killing With Kindness” campaign will not be able to solve all the problems. It will not change the fact that nearly every shelter is underfunded and understaffed, and that in many parts of the country there are no shelters, or the local shelter or pound may be a building with no windows or ventilation, no heat, with few open hours for the public, and all the animals housed there may be killed on a weekly, even daily basis. It will not stop some shelters from legally selling animals to research laboratories. The campaign does not advocate killing as the “solution”; it addresses the killing methods and the reality that the killing will continue for some time.

The “Killing With Kindness” campaign is a grassroots campaign being conducted by thousands of people working together to stop the inhumane killing. It is nonpartisan and without specific affiliations. It includes your constituents and contributors. We hope every animal-related group will support this effort. We regret that any companion animal needs to die. We are sorry that we have to accept that sodium pentobarbital is a cheaper solution than building all the no-kill shelters and sanctuaries necessary to house millions of America’s unwanted pets. We hope that after we successfully pass this law, America will immediately focus on all the factors that have contributed to the current situation of shelters overflowing with animals for whom there are no adoptive homes.

The proposed federal law will not set any “dangerous” legal precedent. It does not violate animal rights – the animals have a right to live, but when all other efforts to save them have been exhausted, they have the right to die with dignity and without torture. The campaign does not lessen the importance of any other solution for stopping the killing, or impede any other effort for animals. It is simply a long overdue necessity and the only practical, compassionate solution for ending one of the worst examples of cruelty in our country!

We hope that one day America will become a no-kill nation. We hope that every level of government will provide funding for spay/neuter programs and that the public will take advantage of such programs as well as behaving more responsibly toward their pets and accepting that pets require a lifetime commitment. We hope that government will provide necessary funding for inspectors to enforce laws that relate to animals and minimum standards of care. We hope that every school in the nation will add a humane education program to its curriculum.

Until such time, for the millions of animals in America who have no hope for adoption, who await a cruel fate because of human irresponsibility, for those whose bodies will be sent to rendering plants, or incinerated, or dumped in landfills, and for those municipalities who do not tally the animal bodies but instead count the tonnage of animals disposed of, we believe this constitutes one of the worst examples of animal cruelty in our nation and one that can be rectified with a single federal law.

We hope the “Killing With Kindness” campaign will become an example of how well we can all work together for the animals. If we cannot yet guarantee them anything else, we can and should guarantee them a gentle death. *Please* help make this federal law a reality and please immediately investigate the euthanasia practices in your own community. Please promote and support every animal adoption resource so that we can all help put an end to the killing.

Sincerely,
(*Your Name/Contact Information and Affiliations*)