



NAIA Trust for the Protection of Animals, Animal Owners and Animal Enterprises

*Educating the Public about the Critical Difference between Animal Welfare and Animal Rights:
Supporting Animal Welfare Using Common Sense, Science and Reason.*

April 25, 2006

Assembly Member Mark Leno, Chairman
California State Assembly Committee on Public Safety
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento CA 95814

In re: Opposition to AB 3027, Animal cruelty: elephants

VIA FACSIMILE 916-319-2113

Dear Assembly Member Mark Leno, Chair, California State Assembly Committee on Public Safety:

I am writing on behalf of the National Animal Interest Alliance Trust (NAIA Trust), a national organization dedicated to securing high standards of animal care and treatment and to preserving the human-animal bond. Our members are pet owners, animal professionals, scientists, veterinarians, businesses and public and private organizations. We have a large number of members in California.

NAIA Trust strongly opposes AB 3027. Rather than promote animal welfare, this bill seeks instead to remove elephants from zoos and the circus to fulfill a radical animal rights agenda. We support the proper care and humane treatment of elephants in zoos and circuses, but this legislation is both unjustified and unnecessary as a means to that end.

As dedicated animal caregivers, our members know that good animal welfare cannot be achieved by legislating arbitrary requirements and restrictions. Good animal welfare for any animal is attained by attending to all of its needs: physical, social, nutritional, biological and mental. The vast majority of zoos and circuses already commit themselves to meeting all these needs for the elephants in their care.

The US Department of Agriculture regulates the care and treatment of zoo and circus animals. They employ veterinarians who are specially qualified to oversee the welfare of animals, including elephants. Because of their unique expertise and the authority delegated to them for this job, we believe that USDA is uniquely suited to deal with the welfare of elephants and that, for the same reasons, state legislatures are poorly suited to judge the unique welfare matters associated with the species involved.

NAIA Trust members recognize that a few people in virtually every business, profession and enterprise fail to conduct themselves honorably or legally. However, this bill is not designed to assure that such people are removed or penalized or to ban methods and devices opposed by animal welfare experts, but rather to discredit the actions of all trainers, to confuse the public into

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thinking malevolent practices are common, and to prevent the circus from being able to utilize elephants at all.

As you consider this bill, please remember that elephants are endangered in most of their natural habitats; that circuses and zoos and the facilities they maintain for these magnificent creatures are among the world's few safe havens for elephant preservation; and that seeing elephants at circuses and zoos often provides young people the spark needed for becoming a veterinarian or wildlife biologist.

Please oppose AB 3027. It does not serve the best interests of elephants. Please call on us if you have any questions regarding provisions in this bill.

Sincerely,

Patti Strand, Trustee, NAIA Trust