

So,
you don't want your rights to own animals taken away.
No one said it would be easy, but here,
in plain and simple English is what
YOU MUST DO!

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By Karen Strange, President
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Elections are looming in many states, with primaries coming up soon and general elections just around the corner in November. While debates concerning various issues are interesting and informative, one of the most effective ways to secure animal ownership, use and enjoyment is to elect those who support our issues. Now is the time to become active and do your part in electing those who will vote against animal rights proposals and for the continuation of our interests in animals.

**Oftentimes, when speaking to various groups,
I make the same statements only to hear rumblings of "I don't like politics" or
"it doesn't matter whether or not I vote; one vote doesn't make a difference".**

I'm here to tell you that **ONE** person and **ONE** vote **CAN** make a difference! When Anne and I started MoFed, **TWO** individuals came together and effectively changed state law to protect our interests. I have heard of races where one vote made the difference in an election, and as few as a dozen votes were all that separated candidates.

Talk and debate is fine, but action on the political front is all that stands between you and the animals you love.

"Like it or not", I tell groups I talk to, "the political process decides whether or not you will continue owning and enjoying animals. If you are not part of the solution to prevent devastating legislation, you are part of the problem that allows it to occur."

I spoke to a large group last Saturday night and brought up several issues looming on the horizon concerning county ordinances. One audience member wanted to know why MoFed didn't keep them informed on all county ordinance proposals along with who was running for local offices such as commissioners, etc. I told him that we worked on state issues and that time did not allow us to track every issue in each of the more than 100 counties in our state, and that it was up to HIM and others in the room to get to know local politicians and to track local proposals. While MoFed could inform them on

what to do, it was up to those living in each district to take responsibility for fighting detrimental proposals and electing those who supported animal ownership.

I then gave suggestions of what every animal owner should be doing before elections:

1. Get a list of who is running for office, including candidates for mayor, city council, commissioner, state Representative, state Senator, U.S. Congress and U.S. Senate.

2. Watch local and statewide newspapers for articles, interviews, letters to the editor and comments about candidates. Is there anything mentioned about agriculture, property rights, conservation issues, the environment, ordinances, animals, etc.? If so, make notes of which candidates were mentioned and what the issues were. Watch for town hall meetings, meet the candidate forums, parades, social events or any event which may draw the candidates to your area. Attend! Seek out any candidate who agrees with your issues and ask how you can help in his or her campaign (it may simply be a bumper sticker or yard sign, but it shows them you are supporting their run for office, and they WILL remember you!). Ask those who disagree with you more about their stance, and if they cannot be educated about animal rights, find their opponent and ask them questions about their stand on animal rights.

3. Call campaign offices of state candidates who agree with your issues and ask for a yard sign and bumper stickers. Get a stack of push cards to hand out to friends and family, and encourage them to vote for that candidate. Get to know the staff working on their campaigns. Oftentimes, they are later hired to work in the offices of the winners and you will have a great foot in the door for educating them further on your issues.

4. Attend fundraisers for the candidates. While some of the higher offices are more costly to attend, many local and state ones are more interested in warm bodies that vote! We had a senator tell us once that he would much rather have 1000 people attend and give him a dollar than for one to attend and give him \$1000. He was interested in votes!

5. Offer to drive your car in a parade for your state House or Senate candidate. Magnetic tapes that won't harm your car are great ways to attach signs and banners. Get as many friends and family members as possible to walk alongside giving out candy, bumper stickers and push cards for the candidate. Work hand in hand with the candidate and the rewards are plentiful during session! My husband and I have a bright yellow Mustang show car. Last week he drove it in a parade for U.S. Senator Talent (who sits on the Senate Ag Committee where PAWS was to be heard). We did the same thing for Governor Blunt when he ran for office as well as various other candidates. The car is in huge demand each election year because it's flashy and gets attention for the candidates. Perhaps you don't have a car to drive, but your

time and help are greatly appreciated at these events, and when devastating legislation is proposed later, many times a phone call is all that is needed to kill the bill. In other words, you support them, they support you.

6. Encourage others to vote. If they're not registered, encourage them to do so. Tonight, I will be sworn in by our county clerk to register people to vote at our county fair next week. See what you can do in your area to get out the vote. Complacency is our greatest enemy in getting the right candidates in office. Put up yard signs in your own yard and ask others to do the same for candidates who support your issues. Offer to help their campaign teams, whether it is stuffing envelopes, helping put up signs or making phone calls. By helping do your part to get the right candidates elected, you are paving the way to protecting your rights.

7. Take every opportunity to educate candidates about the devastating effects of the animal rights movement. Only by having appropriate knowledge can office holders recognize the threat it poses to our rights.

You say you don't like politics? **No longer do we have the luxury of going about our lives ignoring who is in office. It's crucial to the survival of our ownership and enjoyment of animals that we elect the right candidates this election year and that we continue to have a good working relationship with them after they take office.**



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