Federal Government Attack on Big Cats; REXANO Objects to Attempts to Outlaw Touching a Tiger or Lion Cub

REXANO fears new federal bill pushed by animal rights groups is attempting to outlaw touching captive baby exotic cats.

Las Vegas, NV (PRWEB) April 27, 2007 -- Kansas U.S. Representative Kansas Nancy Boyda recently introduced HR 1947 in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is purported "to promote public safety and improve the welfare of captive big cats, and for other purposes," but REXANO believes it will accomplish neither.

This 'feel-good' bill, also known as Haley's Act, is in honor of Haley Hilderbrand who was killed in Kansas on August 2005 by a Siberian tiger while voluntarily posing for a picture in an USDA licensed facility.

"While Haley's untimely death is tragic, this bill wouldn't have prevented this accident. What happened in Haley's case was a violation of existing USDA rules, which forbid public exhibition of any tiger, lion, cougar, cheetah, leopard, or jaguar over the age of 16 weeks without proper caging or barriers even when restrained (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ac/bigcatq&a.html)," says Zuzana Kukol,a Nevada tiger trainer and co-founder of REXANO, "Responsible Exotic Animal Ownership," www.REXANO.org, a free web resource designed to give statistics based research material to private owners of exotic animals to fight unfair legislation.

Tiger that killed Haley was a full grown animal and the exhibitor, 'Lost Creek Animal Sanctuary and Animal Entertainment Productions', broke the existing rules that would have prevented this tragedy, and was punished and closed in 2006. http://www.usda.gov/da/oaljdecisions/AWA_06-0002_110306.pdf

"Since at least 1990 nobody died in US as a result of a captive big cat at large. The best way to avoid being killed by a captive exotic cat is to simply not go on the property where they are being kept." says Scott Shoemaker, REXANO co-founder.

"How does Haley's Act 'ensure humane treatment' of big cats? There is nothing in the bill that would ensure humane treatment beyond what the Animal Welfare Act already does?" asks Polly Britton, an Ohio animal owner and Secretary of the Ohio Association of Animal Owners, www.OAAO.us. "Looks to me like all Haley's Act does is create a means for USDA to deny/revoke a license simply because some state or local agency or official recommends it, while placing a moratorium on new private big cat USDA facilities."

U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) is the federal government agency that regulates commercial exhibition of animals. Their Animal Welfare Act (AWA) requires that minimum standards for the humane care of animals be met at licensed facilities.

According to REXANO, this bill also appears unconstitutional, as it creates monopoly on exhibiting baby big cats under 16 weeks of age by exempting zoos accredited by private group AZA (American Zoo and Aquarium Association).

According to Antitrust Division of Department of Justice, 'The Sherman Antitrust Act' says: "An unlawful monopoly exists when only one firm controls the market for a product or service, and it has obtained that market power, not because its product or service is superior to others, but by suppressing competition with anticompetitive conduct." It also expresses national commitment to a free market economy in which competition free from private and governmental restraints leads to the best results for consumers.

"I am wondering if legislators might be unwittingly creating a monopoly and assaulting the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, 'Equal protection of the law', by introducing and passing unfair bills while exempting private group AZA," ponders Kukol"This is unAmerican. We want to warn everybody; should this bill pass, it would end most live educational school shows featuring baby exotic cats that are currently presented by private non AZA educators."

"Kids are fascinated by big cat cubs. Kids learn valuable lessons about life from being around such incredible animals. Haley's act makes such learning a crime," says 'Tim Stoffel the Lion Man' http://www.lionlamb.us/lion.html.

REXANO is aware that unfortunate incidents can become sensationalized by the media and used by animal rights (AR) fanatics to incite the public and legislators into overreacting to a rare incident, when in reality only 17 people were fatally mauled by big cats since 1990, which is one death per year.

"There is a hidden agenda with regard to all of these laws and it has nothing to do with public safety or concerns for good animal care. Rather, it is about eroding or removing American freedoms, the right to own as many animals as we can provide for," states Kim Bloomer a natural pet care educator and host of the online radio show Animal Talk Naturally www.AnimalTalkNaturally.com.

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, 53,500 children from ages 0-19 died in 2003, many in activities involving toys, pools, cars, bicycles, boating, sports, but there is no federal legislation restricting the public from them. "Why not, isn't their life/death sensationalized or important enough to name a bill after them?" asks Kukol.

REXANO is committed to protect the rights of animal owners and supports responsible private ownership of exotic animals in any form, be it non commercial pet or sanctuary, as well as commercial breeder or exhibitor.

ATTACHED FILES

White tiger cub
Cute white tiger cub sleeping
Uploaded: Apr 25, 2007
File Name:tigercubheadache.jpg

Tiger Cub
This kind of loving and harmless interaction with tiger cubs would be outlawed with Haley's act
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File Name:tigerhug.jpg

Tiger Fatalities
Human fatalities caused by all captive US tigers and comparing AZA zoos vs. non AZA odds
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Statistics on exotic animal fatalities
Statistics on human fatalities caused by captive exotic animals in the USA compared to every day life
Uploaded: Apr 25, 2007
File Name:NumberOddsDeathLifeExotic.pdf