

Mercy for Animals Decries Otter signing of Ag-Gag bill

Gary Smith/Mercy for Animals

Governor Otter has failed Idaho and the American people. By signing this bill into law, he has sided with those who seek to keep Idaho's corrupt factory farming practices hidden from public view and created a safe haven for animal abuse and other criminal activity in the state. Mercy For Animals is exploring all legal avenues to overturn this dangerous, unconstitutional, and un-American law.

Not only will this ag-gag law perpetuate animal abuse, it endangers workers' rights, consumer health and safety, and the freedom of journalists, employees, and the public at large to share information about something as fundamental as our food supply. This law is bad for consumers, who want more, not less, transparency in food production.

Bowing to pressure from the corporate factory farming interests in Idaho, Governor Otter betrayed the will of his constituents and the majority of Americans who strongly oppose efforts to criminalize whistleblowers who dare to expose cruelty and corruption on Idaho's farms. Clearly Governor Otter knows that Idaho's factory farmers have a lot to hide from the American people if he is willing to go to such despicable lengths to conceal their cruel and abusive practices.

Although similar ag-gag bills have been proposed in states all across the country at the behest of the multibillion-dollar meat, dairy, and egg industries, the majority of those bills have been defeated. Unfortunately, Idaho's flawed and misdirected new law will now throw shut the doors to industrial factory farms and allow animal abuse, environmental violations, and food contamination to flourish undetected, unchallenged, and unaddressed.

Undercover investigations by Mercy For Animals and other groups have led to landmark corporate animal welfare policy reforms, new and improved laws to protect farmed animals and the environment, felony convictions of animal abusers, increased consumer protection and food safety initiatives, and the closure of particularly corrupt facilities. Without undercover investigations, there are oftentimes no effective watchdogs protecting animals from egregious cruelty in these facilities or the public from serious health violations.

Consumers have a right to know how their food is produced and how animals on factory farms are abused so they can make informed choices. But now, due to this misguided law, consumers would be wise to assume that food produced on Idaho farms is the product of systematic cruelty and corruption.

For more information on Mercy For Animals' undercover investigation in Idaho, please visit MercyForAnimals.org/ID.