

Pathways to Political Influence: USA

Toward Meaningful Political Reform for All Future Sentient Life in the United States of America

Sentience Politics Working Paper

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September 2016

Summary

Who is working on US political reform for animals? The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is by far the biggest spender on reform for farmed animals, spending roughly \$10 million - \$20 million per year and focusing on welfare reforms. The Nonhuman Rights Project (NHRP) is a pioneer but still small player working on lawsuits promoting legal personhood for certain intelligent mammals (net assets apparently around \$1 million). Other organizations and grassroots movements have US politics-related plans, but the details, tactics, and results are usually either minor or still taking root. Notably, Mercy for Animals (MFA), The Humane League (THL), and others work heavily on corporate outreach, which has similar characteristics.

To what extent should SP work on direct political influence? This remains mostly unclear. It remains mostly unclear how ballot initiatives vs. lobbying compare with respect to their costs and likelihoods of success. It is clear that ballot initiatives have highest feasibility in small, progressive cities and counties (e.g., Berkeley, Calif. and Cambridge, Mass.). Before deciding on strategies or concrete goals, a certain battery of experts should be consulted, with an eye toward feasibility estimation and coalition-building.

What other roles could Sentience Politics play? The notable ideas fall under the rubric of intellectual support, meaning some combination of policy papers/proposals, movement-building (e.g. university outreach or chapter-forming), and political coalition-building.

What policy goals should Sentience Politics push for (regardless of who does the lobbying)? Sentience Politics could consider arguing for any of the following: novel welfare reform ideas, NHRP-type legal rights via statute, animal-friendly tax reforms, or meat labeling. They can also serve as pioneers regarding more future-oriented topics such as insect, wild animal, and digital suffering.

Whom should Sentience Politics consult for more ideas and certainty? Essential figures include the likes of HSUS, NHRP, and the ALDF. Recommended figures include the Open Philanthropy Project, the Good Food Institute, Project Berkeley, and the Animal Welfare Institute.

OPEN QUESTIONS

Internal to SP:

1. Should SP-USA focus on political outreach (e.g. lobbying, ballot initiatives), strictly on ideation (e.g., policy papers/proposals, chapter movement-building, political coalition-building), or on both?
2. To what causes/issues would SP best be able to provide intellectual support? (See [section](#) listing ideas)

To decide with the help of key advisors:

3. Assuming SP focuses on political action:
 - a. Should it focus on ballot initiatives or lobbying?
 - b. Which locales are best?
4. What should be the content of any political outreach agenda?

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Introduction

This document gives a shallow overview of potential inroads to making political change in the United States of America on behalf of all sentient creatures. This is relevant given the Sentience Politics belief that all sentient creatures deserve moral consideration---including, but not limited to, farmed animals, wild animals, and digital sentient life should it ever exist.

This document's purpose is to elucidate political strategies for advancing the welfare or rights (and thereby ultimately reducing the suffering) of sentient creatures. Relevant questions include which level of government to focus on (federal, state, county, or municipal), as well as which government branches to focus on (direct democracy tactics, legislatures, executive, judicial). It will also be helpful to survey the activities of the other few organizations working in this space.

Many questions are open, including whether Sentience Politics should concentrate on work in the USA, and to what extent it should be involved in ideation versus political footwork/action/lobbying.¹

What has Sentience Politics focused on so far?

To outline:

- initiatives
 - mandate at least one plant-based meal option in public cafeteria menus
 - Basel, Zurich, and Lucerne, Switzerland
 - to be voted on sometime in 2017 or 2018
 - basic rights for primates
 - Basel, Switzerland
 - 1% of city budget to effective aid
 - Zurich, Switzerland
- policy papers
 - [sustainable food](#)
 - [cultured meat](#)
 - [primate rights](#)
 - [invertebrate suffering](#)
- events
 - [Sentience Conference](#)

¹ See [appendix](#): Why the USA?

Background: Existing Reforms and their Costs

Major existing Federal laws and reforms

Two major existing US federal laws governing animals are the following. The Humane Methods of Slaughter Act of 1958 requires anesthetization or instant stunning of “cattle, calves, horses, mules, sheep, swine and other livestock, except in the case of kosher slaughter”. It does not cover birds, fish, rabbits, or any other animals routinely slaughtered for food--roughly 99.7% of the animals slaughtered for food in the US.²

The Animal Welfare Act of 1966 protects animals used for research and exhibition.

Information about the genesis & cost of these measures has not yet been investigated for this writeup.

State ballot initiatives

State welfare reform laws protecting farmed animals have started to emerge since the 1990s. Despite a grand failure in a 1988 Massachusetts ballot initiative for farmed animals (only 21% of voters voted in favor), a 1994 Florida Marine Net Fishing Amendment was passed with 72% of voters in favor.

Since the turn of the century, victories for farmed animals have started to accumulate. According to a useful HSUS [compilation](#), currently 7 states ban gestation crates, 5 ban veal crates, and 2 ban battery cages. Additionally, California currently bans the sale of eggs from battery cage facilities, tail docking of cows used for dairy, and bans force-feeding of birds (despite an ensuing legal battle).

As the below table begins to show, the pushing for these laws as far as we can tell is a multi-million dollar project. (More on this below in the section on [section on ballot measures](#).) See additional initiatives in a Sentience Politics [spreadsheet](#).

Table: selected laws & attempted laws affecting farmed animals or fish

law / attempt	origin	year	description	major sponsor	‘Yes’ spending	% vote in favor
Massachusetts Treatment of Farm Animals, Question 3	ballot measure	1988	regulate treatment of farm animals	unknown	no data	29%

² This rough calculation is based on figures coming from a Counting Animals [blog post](#): roughly 137,579,995 animals covered vs. 54,121,760,459 chickens, turkeys, ducks, and marine animals not covered.

Florida Marine Net Fishing, Amendment 3	ballot measure	1994	prohibit use of gill and other entangling nets in Florida waters	unknown	no data	72%
Florida Animal Cruelty, Amendment 10	ballot measure	2002	ban gestation crates	HSUS	no data	62%
Oregon SB 694	legislative	2007	ban gestation crates	HSUS	no data	House 32 to 25; Senate 20 to 9
California Proposition 2: Standards for Confining Animals	ballot measure	2008	ban gestation crates, veal crates, battery cages	HSUS	\$10.5 million (\$4.1 million from HSUS)	64%
Massachusetts Question 3: Minimum Size Requirements for Farm Animal Containment	ballot measure	2016	ban gestation crates, veal crates, battery cages	HSUS	\$1.07 million and counting (\$1.06 million from HSUS)	TBD

Who else is working on this?

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

HSUS is the clear leader working on US state and federal welfare reforms. They are also by far the largest animal advocacy organization in the US in financial terms, with assets of around \$215 million according to their [2014 Form 990](#). By way of comparison, it appears that the next largest US-based animal advocacy groups, paired with their approximate net assets, are PETA ([\\$42 million](#)) and Mercy for Animals ([\\$5 million](#)). (Note: the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) has net assets of around [\\$228 million](#); however, the extent to which they focus on animals other than cats and dogs appears to be negligible.)

Overall, farmed animals apparently receive 5-10% of HSUS's overall budget, according to a public [interview](#) with Paul Shapiro, Vice President for Farm Animal Protection. Doing the math, this would amount to about \$10 million to \$20 million per year.

The Nonhuman Rights Project (NHRP)

The NHRP is focused not on welfare reforms but on fundamental legal rights. In particular, they advocate for the following two fundamental rights, as they [explain](#):

Bodily liberty means not being held in captivity. For a chimpanzee, it means not spending life in a laboratory; for an elephant, it means not being chained in a circus; for a whale it means not being imprisoned in a park.

Bodily integrity means not being touched without consent or in one's best interests. For a chimpanzee, it means not being subjected to biomedical research. For an elephant it means not being beaten at a circus. For a whale it means not being forcibly inseminated to make her pregnant.

Per the NHRP's current website [Q&A](#), the thought is that these rights belong to beings who are self-aware and autonomous. These are thought to include great apes, elephants, dolphins, and whales.

Primarily they are working on this in the judicial system through litigation. So far there have been three major court cases, all of them involving chimpanzee plaintiffs in New York State (Hercules & Leo, Tommy, and Kiko).

NHRP's [2014 Form 990](#) shows their net assets to be around \$1 million.

Project Berkeley (PB)

Project Berkeley (PB) is the working name of a nascent effort to build a coalition of groups to promote animal rights political and commercial reform in Berkeley, California, USA. Legislative ideas currently being considered include:

- *Establishing primate legal rights* of bodily integrity and bodily liberty, or possibly such rights for cetaceans
- *A Compassionate Code* increasing protections for animals
 - enact further restrictions on the abuse, abandonment, neglect, and fighting of animals
 - Potentially using the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) [Model Animal Projection Laws](#) as a partial guide.
- *Establishment of Berkeley as a "Shelter City"* meaning that any requirements to return animals who were rescued from danger would be considered null and void (compare to 'fugitive slave' laws in the 1800s).
- *Labeling meat products* somehow, possibly with information relating to [colon cancer risk](#), but possibly some other, more animal-oriented message.

Still in its infancy, the group is already beginning to reach out to the likes of the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP), the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF), etc. Founding members have connections with DxE, but Project Berkeley is not under its auspices, and PB's intention is to be a coalition of San Francisco Bay Area animal rights activists from many groups.

Direct Action Everywhere (DxE)

These political and commercial efforts coincide with DxE's efforts to encourage activists in their worldwide network to move to Berkeley in order to concentrate their influence.

A noteworthy development in the animal rights movement generally is DxE's development of a [The Forty-Year Roadmap to Animal Liberation](#). The document outlines ambitious incremental goals cumulating in the passage of a Species Equality Amendment in one or more states or countries by 2055. The first politically related milestone is the goal of banning "meat" in Berkeley by 2025--construed in the document's present form as "ban[ing] the sale of all or certain animal products within city limits and/or other successful legislative efforts, e.g. banning fur or slaughter." In other words vision is to [ban meat in Berkeley](#) and then elsewhere.

Should Sentience Politics get involved here, its contributions could include:

- Policy analysis regarding proposed bans
 - Reasoning behind them
 - Ramifications of the policy proposals
 - Assistance in ascertaining the degree of public support for candidate proposals
- Advice and/or brainstorming help with Project Berkeley about appropriate goals (e.g. which animal products to focus on)

Animals and Society Institute (ASI)

Norm Phelps, in his 2007 book *The Longest Struggle*, writes that activist Kim Stallwood had, circa 2002, founded the Animals and Society Institute, "which describes itself as an 'animal rights public policy institute,' i.e., a think tank for the animals' cause, focused on developing a public policy agenda that can be supported by a wide spectrum of animal rights groups." Stallwood was also said, circa 2006, to be "working with activists from across the movement to develop the Animals' Platform, a statement of principles that he hopes can be used to inject animal protection into our national political dialogue and give animals the kind of clout in America's legislatures that they have gained in the UK and Europe."³

The ASI website currently is characterized by information relating to human-animal studies (HAS). The website's [about](#) section says "ASI helps improve and expand knowledge about human-animal relationships in order to create safer and more compassionate communities for all." The difference between these two versions of ASI is striking, and it is worth interviewing Stallwood about what happened with the Animals' Platform.

³ Phelps, Norm, *The Longest Struggle: Animal Advocacy from Pythagoras to PETA*, New York: Lantern Books, pp. 292-3.

Candidate Policy Goals

Political endeavors could fall into any of a number of categories, and it can be helpful to categorize them so as to identify where Sentience Politics could have a comparative advantage.

Welfare Reforms

HSUS has a significant comparative advantages of money and expertise for pushing for welfare reforms. Given their track of success with state-level welfare reforms (regarding gestation crates, veal crates, battery cages, etc.), similar future efforts are presumably best left to HSUS. Of course, HSUS is a natural ally and essential source of advice for other efforts.

SP's comparative advantage in this space could be on assembling or creating intellectual resources HSUS has not come up with. Examples range from policy papers on fish welfare to philosophical papers on digital sentience.

Rights provisions

NHRP has advocated for certain rights for chimpanzees through legal reform, with limited success. One factor limiting success is that current laws and precedents do not clearly assist these efforts (e.g., it is not clear whether the right to a writ of habeas corpus applies to a nonhuman animal). A legislative initiative could clarify and give legal support for these efforts.

The difficulties would be with framing such legislative efforts so as to make success most probable. The most notable anticipated resistance would be from those who most routinely confine the primates, whales, dolphins, and elephants whom NHRP-style regulations would be intended to protect. These, of course, would include research laboratories, zoos, and circuses.

Relatedly, the Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) has a [Model Ordinance for Great Apes](#).

Other ideas

Dietary/menu reforms

Just as Sentience Politics is hoping to [force a ballot initiative](#) on the expansion of vegan options in all government-funded dining halls in Basel and Zurich, Switzerland, similar efforts could be made in the US.

Relatedly, mandated meat reduction could also be worked on. "[Meatless Monday](#)" has been promoted frequently in the US, including [by HSUS](#) (cf. [Kristie Middleton](#)), so too this could be pursued as a matter of government policy.

Tax reforms

Tax breaks to certain animal-friendly businesses are perhaps the most viable way to change financial incentives in animals' favor. At least two viable examples come to mind. A given locale might provide tax breaks, or even subsidies, to:

- All-vegan retailers
 - Food: restaurants, grocery stores
 - Other products: e.g. businesses producing animal- and environment-friendly alternatives to leather or fur
- Animal product replacement manufacturers
 - Cultured dairy, eggs, or meat
 - Mock meat products
- Animal product replacement research

There may be some precedent in [tax credits for installing solar panels](#) when we think of environmental rationales. Another rationale that may already concern governments is the risk of pandemics/"superbugs" due to factory farming.

Taxes⁴ on animal products could eventually be viable in some small, very liberal locales. There is some precedent given the similar "soda tax" on sugary drinks passed in [Berkeley](#), [New York](#), then [Philadelphia](#). However, the enormous influence of the animal agriculture industry would probably limit such tactics to city- or county-level locales.

Ending federal agricultural subsidies is a massive, well-discussed federal issue that is nonetheless high-impact. Total government aid to farmers will some [\\$23.9 billion](#) in 2017, and much of this money goes roughly [to the richest 10%](#) of farm families. A first-glance analysis of cuts to these subsidies suggests that a diversification of crops could result and that the artificially low price of meat (low due to the low price of feed) would rise. We should guess that this issue is popular enough and mainstream enough that political groups and economic think tanks are already working on this--but who is working on that, specifically, is worth some further investigation.

Meat labeling

One idea currently circulating in Project Berkeley is that of instituting warning labels on meat. One idea for the labels' content is that of a warning regarding [colon cancer risk](#). Sentience Politics could investigate and write papers about the benefits of such labels, and/or support the furtherance of this strategy in other locales.

⁴ For some years now an author named Dr. Richard Oppenlander, DDS has advocated an "[eco- and health-risk tax](#)." The right think tank employee could crunch the numbers to flesh out and help justify such a tax, framed as an offset of the environmental and health problems that animal agriculture and animal products create.

Compassionate codes

Again to mention Project Berkeley, SP could join the efforts pass compassionate codes (restricting the abuse, abandonment, neglect, and fighting of animals, cf. Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF) [Model Animal Protection Laws](#)).

Plausible Pathways to Political Influence

Direct democracy (ballot measures)

There is no mechanism for ballot measures at the federal level.

State initiatives

Successfully presenting ballot measures in US states is relatively expensive and difficult. Only some states (mostly western states) allow ballot initiatives; see [map 1](#), [map 2](#).

State initiatives usually carry a hefty price tag, something on the order of \$5 million - \$25 million (e.g., a median of [\\$19.8 million](#) per measure in California over 2004-2010, [\\$1.4 million](#) on average in the state of Washington).

One major expense is recruiting people to acquire the signatures required to get a measure on the ballot. The number required is usually a certain fraction of the votes cast in the previous gubernatorial election.

Other expenses include getting a sufficient amount of signatures to account for invalid ones, then actually advertising in favor of a 'Yes' vote.

The following table gives an idea of the cost of getting the minimum amount of required signatures for a statute ballot initiative, by state, for every state that allows them. *Note: the data is incomplete and taken from separate sources, and should only be taken as a vague estimate. THIS IS NOT TO BE USED FOR BUDGETING PURPOSES.*

Estimated base cost of getting minimum amount of required signatures

state allowing statute by ballot initiative	number of signatures required, per most recent signature requirements, for a statute (Sep. 2016 source)	average Cost Per Required Signature, 2014	estimated minimum cost to attain signature minimum
Alaska	28,545	\$1.67	\$47,670.15
Arizona	150,642	no data	n/a
Arkansas	67,887	\$1.23	\$83,501.01
California	365,880	\$3.92	\$1,434,249.60

Colorado	98,492	\$1.37	\$134,934.04
Idaho	47,623	no data	n/a
Maine	61,123	\$1.36	\$83,127.28
Massachusetts	64,750	\$1.05	\$67,987.50
Michigan	252,523	\$2.53	\$638,883.19
Montana	24,174	no data	n/a
Nebraska	81,136	\$4.49	\$364,300.64
Nevada	55,234	no data	n/a
North Dakota	13,452	no data	n/a
Ohio	183,354	no data	n/a
Oklahoma	65,987	no data	n/a
Oregon	88,184	\$5.83	\$514,112.72
South Dakota	13,871	no data	n/a
Utah	51,440	no data	n/a
Washington	246,372	\$2.67	\$657,813.24
Wyoming	25,673	no data	n/a
median	65,369	\$2.10	\$249,617.34
mean	99,317	\$2.61	\$402,657.94
min	13,452 (N.D.)	\$1.05 (Mass.)	\$47,670.15 (Alaska)
max	365,880 (Calif.)	\$5.83 (Calif.)	\$1,434,249.60 (Calif.)

Massachusetts emerges as one state in which future ballot initiatives might be tried, if any. Pro factors include:

- the relatively low estimated cost per statute ballot initiative
- the liberal leanings of the state
- Boston/Cambridge's status as a hub for intellectual elites
- the cultural precedent that could be set by the [minimum size requirement ballot initiative of 2016](#)

Local initiatives

Successfully presenting ballot measures in certain cities or counties may be more reasonable depending on the locale. While at present no guide to 'where ballot measures are easiest in the US' is easily found, we can make a list of educated guesses based on required signature counts and the presence of area animal activists. However, further research would be required to obtain adequate data about the expected costs is not easy to come by. Presently this report must rely on news about isolated, newsworthy, contested initiatives.

A few extant hubs should be mentioned where ballot initiatives seem relatively easy or where a high presence of animal activist organizations or grassroots groups exist:

1. Berkeley, Calif.

- advantages:
 - Bay Area is largest hub of the Effective Altruism movement

- strong presence of many animal advocacy organizations & grassroots networks
- small population of c. 110,000 means low number of required signatures & votes
- history of high-impact ballot initiatives, e.g. America's first [soda ban](#)
- **minimum required signatures: 2,638** ([source](#), [confirmation](#)).
 - According to "[The Local Initiative in California](#)", Ch. 2, Table 2.2, only 5% of voter signatures in the previous mayoral election are needed to get an initiative on the ballot. This is lower than most any other California city, for which the typical city ballot initiative requires 10% of registered voters. However, Berkeley is one of a few select charter cities where the threshold is lower.
 - Other small, California charter cities with lower-than-typical thresholds, both in the San Francisco Bay Area, include **Palo Alto** (pop. 66,000; 6% of registered voters' signatures required) and **Alhambra** (pop. 85,000; 15% of previous municipal election voter count required)
- **anticipated expense ballpark estimate:**
 - Could require tens, hundreds of thousands of dollars, even over a million dollars, depending on the issue and who opposes it
 - By reference, consider [spending regarding Measure D](#), the ballot initiative to tax sugary drinks: the Yes campaign spent over \$929,000, whereas the the soda industry spent over [\\$2.4 million](#). (It passed anyway, [75% to 25%](#).)
 - Cannot find useful data about the *distribution* of campaign spending by ballot measure. However, it's wisest to bet that a Berkeley ballot initiative involving animals would be among the *more* controversial questions, and would be actively opposed either by animal farming industries, science communities, or both.

2. Cambridge, Mass.

- **advantages:**
 - intellectual hub (home of Harvard, MIT, etc.);
 - low population of c. 106,000;
 - [8% of registered voters' signatures](#) are needed

3. Washington, DC : headquarters of many animal rights and environmental nonprofit organizations

- [10% of registered voters required](#)

4. Los Angeles, Calif. : headquarters of many animal rights organizations

- signature count is 15% of voters in previous mayoral election
- but population is over 3 million

Ballot measure consultancies

Ballot measure consultancy businesses have emerged as a means of managing ballot measure campaigns. A list is [here](#). Notable firms include [Winner & Mandabach](#) and [Arno Petition Consultants](#). An investigatory consultation could provide more complete information and a fuller list of candidate locales where this report cannot. So far SP has not contacted any such US-oriented firm for a consultation cost estimate.

Lobbying and Policy Ideation: Legislative Involvement

Lobbying. Lobbying can take many forms, and will probably have very different costs at different levels and in different (sized) locales. For this paper there has not been time to look with much depth at lobbying costs or methods.

What is known is that at a level as local as Berkeley, California, Project Berkeley members have been able to sit, chat, and brainstorm with multiple city councilmembers as volunteers and as the result of a simple email. It's probable that gaining legislators' attention this would be harder in a larger metropolis, and very probable this would be much harder at the state or especially the federal levels.

More research is required about lobbying expenses and expected results.

Policy ideation. SP could also focus on more theoretical, think tank type work: e.g., policy papers, policy proposals, example laws, etc. The costs here would presumably be lower, and policy-related ideation could provide inroads for later lobbying. The intellectual talents needed might include:

- General policy-related expertise
- Economics expertise for assessing the economic ramifications of policy proposals
- Legal talent/knowledge
- Environmental expertise
- Expertise on animal sentience, informed by biology, cognitive science, and/or philosophy
- Animal care expertise
- Etc.

Lobbying and Policy Ideation: Executive Branch

Individuals in executive branches--mayors, governors, the president, etc.--may be apt targets for policy-oriented lobbying or outreach. Weighing in favor of this is the fact that such individuals have a high proportion of power compared with anyone else. Weighing against this is the fact that such individuals are among the busiest people on Earth, distracted by a plethora of concern. Probably they are most worth targeting with open letters when a campaign is already begun, e.g. when their endorsement of a currently discussed policy is needed.

Domestic policy is the most obvious arena on which executive branch policies could be enacted. However, **foreign policy** could be also worth pursuing. For example, it could be easier to ban import of, say, certain kinds of animal meat or even meat raised under certain conditions (e.g. gestation crates), than it would be to ban the raising of that meat within the US. This is because backlash by domestic farmers and their lobbying groups would have political consequences that foreign farmers' backlash might not.

Some such policies may be established by regulators within the federal executive branch. For cases where this were true, it could be useful and cost-effective to reach out to those regulators (e.g. threatening a media storm). One would predict, of course, that legislatures would step in should the controversy become very public.

Judicial action

NHRP and ALDF seem to have the bases covered here. SP would have comparative advantage only with a shift in priority toward applied legal expertise.

Intellectual Support Agenda Possibilities

Sentience Politics in Europe has so far been conceived as a “think-and-do” tank. One way to construe this is that SP has been concerned not only with conceiving policy ideas and writing policy papers about them, but also working on the lobbying and political organizing fronts to try to get these ideas passed as laws.

The relative difficulties of lobbying and political organize may convince us that SP-USA should be primarily a think tank, and involve itself less with lobbying or political organizing than has SP in Europe, at least in Switzerland. Or at least that the few applied political endeavors it gets involved in be relatively cheap ones. Or that SP-USA delegate these tasks to specific partner organizations and coalitions (and perhaps play a role in help recruit/initiate such coalitions).

In any event, this section sets out some ideas on how to best engage in such ideation (mostly these are due to [Jacy Reese's initial brainstorming document](#)).

It should be noted that we are currently insufficiently familiar with the activities of the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI), and should interview them to achieve a better sense about what they're working on and and what of that, if anything, overlaps with the following.

Policy Papers

Of a piece with what other organizations are already beginning to work on and may well be working on in the next five years or so (HSUS in the political arena, Mercy for Animals and The Humane League in the corporate world):

- fish welfare

- (publicizing) papers on animal product alternatives (should consult with GFI)
- quantification/prioritization of sentience/welfare by population
- intellectual support for personhood & personhood-related rights (esp. bodily liberty & bodily integrity)
- pitching earning-to-give
- intellectual support for broiler chicken humane reforms
- intellectual support for cage-free eggs

More future-oriented policy ideation, less connected to the current priorities of the current animal movement, will include:

- material on invertebrate sentience
- material on wild animal suffering
- material on digital sentience

Effective Animal Activism (EAA) Movement-Building

Giving What We Can (GWWC) and The Life You Can Save (TLYCS) are examples of groups who have played a major role in building the effective altruism movement. GWWC's leaders helped coin the term, provide a structure for pledging, help popularize some initial ideas and charities, etc.

Some ideas of roles that SP could play along these lines, at least in the USA, might include:

- social media outreach
- giving talks/workshops (e.g. pitching earning-to-give for animals)
- promoting a help-the-most-animals approach to undergraduate and graduate students
- providing effective animal activism activities/lesson plans/accountability/mentorship/etc.
 - for existing effective altruism local groups (esp. college?)
 - for existing animal activism groups (esp. college?)
 - for any issue-specific Effective Animal Activism groups/chapters SP might try to start/brand

Coalition building

To whatever extent SP-USA writes policy papers or makes policy proposals but lacks the ability to carry them out themselves, they might try to influence other groups with the capacity or inclination to act on them. For example, SP might play a role in assembling some coalition of groups to form a task force on corporate or political outreach regarding welfare improvements for fish, or, say, a total meat reduction campaign targeting fish consumption.

Obviously, it could be very useful to partner with other organizations for the purposes of drafting policy papers or proposals as well (e.g. ALDF for legal questions; GFI regarding the state of the animal product alternatives industries, etc.).

Figures and Organizations SP should consider consulting

The thought is that conversations with these organizations/people could be notated and preserved in [the style](#) used by GiveWell (see, for example, [this](#) conversation with Paul Shapiro).

ESSENTIAL

- **Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)**
 - Paul Shapiro, Vice President, Farm Animal Protection
- **Nonhuman Rights Project (NHRP):**
 - Kevin Schneider, Executive Director
 - Steven Wise, President

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

- **Open Philanthropy Project** : a potential source of funding and priority calibration
 - Lewis Bollard, Program Officer, Farm Animal Welfare
- **Animals and Society Institute** : regarding the former Animals' Platform
 - [Kim Stallwood](#), former European Director (?), kim@kimstallwood.com
- **The Humane League**
 - Aaron Ross, Director of Campaigns
- **Project Berkeley**
 - Amy Halpern-Laff, Arun Rao, Zach Groff, & Jay Quigley, selected Project Berkeley co-organizers
- **Direct Action Everywhere (DxE)**
 - Wayne Hsiung, co-founder
- **Good Food Institute** : esp. re. advice about policies promoting animal product alternatives
 - Bruce Friedrich, Executive Director
 - Nicole Negowetti, Policy Directors
- **Animal Welfare Institute** : to compare SP's potential think tank work with theirs
 - Nancy Blaney, Senior Federal Policy Advisor
 - Joanna Grossman, Ph.D., Federal Policy Advisor
 - Michelle Pawliger, Farm Animal Policy Associate

ALSO RECOMMENDED

- **Animal Legal Defense Fund (ALDF)**
- **Compassion Over Killing (COK)**
 - Erica Meier, Executive Director
 - Cheryl Leahy, General Counsel
- **Mercy for Animals (MFA)**

- **Animal Charity Evaluators (ACE)**
- **American Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)**
- **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)**

OTHER POSSIBLY RELEVANT GROUPS:

- **California Political Action Committee for Animals (PAW PAC)**
 - Eric Mills
 - Beverlee McGrath
- **Farm Forward**
 - Steven Jay Gross, Ph.D., Chairman of the Board
 - Michael McFadden, Esq., General Counsel, Policy & Program Director
 - Ben Goldsmith, Executive Director
- **Compassion in World Farming**
 - Leah Garces, USA Director
- **Farm Sanctuary**

People who could be consulted or hired

- [Jay Shooster](#) (EA & recent New York University law graduate)
- [Matthew Gentzel](#) (Cofounder of Effective Altruism Policy Analytics)
- [Chris Byrd](#) (legal researcher)
- [Jonathan Robinson](#) (apparently has expertise in see [conversation](#))
- [Oriane Gaillard](#) (UK)
- Louis Parr (UK)

Appendix: Why the USA?

Reasons to focus on the USA include:

- It is a large, wealthy, and politically influential country
- The USA is home to a relatively well-organized animal rights community

Reasons not to focus on the USA include:

- The two-party system can make political change relatively difficult
- The USA is home to powerful animal agriculture interests, already accustomed to receiving billions of dollars per year in [agricultural subsidies](#).

What countries will/could Sentience Politics focus on?

Sentience Politics has been active primarily in the German-speaking world (Switzerland, Germany, and Austria) and the UK, as of September 2016. As of September 2016, Sentience

Politics has [announced](#) its intention to extend its staff by 2-4 people in the US (likely NYC), 1-2 people in Latin America and Spain/Portugal, 1-2 people in India, and 1-2 people in Hong Kong and China.

Without looking deeply into the issue, it would seem that [China](#) and [India](#) would be toward the top of various lists about where to focus in terms of **importance** or **neglectedness**, since they are [among world leaders](#) in meat consumption trends. Moreover, consider that over a billion consumers for both countries apiece are under a single national legal system. This means that policy changes there would affect a disproportionate amount of would-be meat consumers.

Another criterion for selecting where to work would be **tractability**. [Israel](#) comes to mind here as a place with high tractability, since it has a [reputation](#) as a place where animal rights activism and sentiments run high. Sweden, New Zealand, and possibly Canada could possibly be good places to focus for similar reasons.

More research may be required about where to move forward with reform efforts.