

Smitty Pignatelli, Chairman
House Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture
State House, Room 473F
Boston, MA 02133

Anne Gobi, Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture
State House, Room 513
Boston, MA 02133

September 22, 2017

Dear Chairman Pignatelli and Chairwoman Gobi:

We write to you today concerning the welfare of elephants in traveling shows and ask that you report bill H.418, An Act relative to the use of elephants in traveling animal acts, favorably.

The inhumane treatment of these animals warrants our moral concern. Elephants are remarkable animals renowned for their memory and intelligence. To subject these animals to a miserable life on the road, where they are robbed of the ability to express their most basic and natural behavior is cruel and preventable.

Elephants in traveling shows are chained, confined to small spaces, shocked with electric prods, hit and stabbed with bullhooks, and kept in socially-deprived conditions to learn circus tricks, which in and of themselves cause "a great deal of stress on the muscles and joints of these very large mammals."¹ Immobilizing these animals that are meant to roam the vast savannah to small pens where they have to stand in their own excrement results in problems such as degenerative joint disease and foot disorders- which are the leading causes of euthanasia in captive elephants- as well as urine burns, rotting and cracked foot pads, and cracked and infected nails.

Not only do elephants suffer physically as a result of negative reinforcement training, they suffer immense long-term psychological trauma and stress as well. It bears repeating that the fear of punishment is the sole reason elephants perform acts for humans that would be considered brutally outlandish in their natural environment. Even though circuses are moderately regulated by the federal Animal Welfare Act, there is no agency that monitors training sessions when the most violent abuses occur. Often times, no one is allowed in training areas, which are usually fenced off and blocked from public view. Watching elephants perform unnatural tricks does not teach our children respect or appreciation for animals, nor does it teach children how elephants

Jill D. Mellen and Sue Ellis, "Animal Learning and Husbandry Training," *Wild Mammals in Captivity: Principles and Techniques*, eds. Devra Kleiman et al. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996) 92.

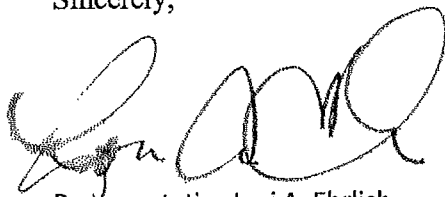
behave naturally in the wild. Instead, it teaches our children that it is acceptable to exploit and mistreat animals for amusement and profit.

Public opinion is already shifting on the captivity of wild animals for entertainment. In March, 2016, Feld Entertainment, the parent company of Ringling Bros., by far the largest operator in this space, first announced they would not be using elephants in their circuses. In January, 2017 they followed up with an announcement of the complete closure of the circus. This decision was both economic and a reflection of changing attitudes. This is great news for the wild animals in their shows but there are still several smaller circuses performing in Massachusetts with elephants that need our help.

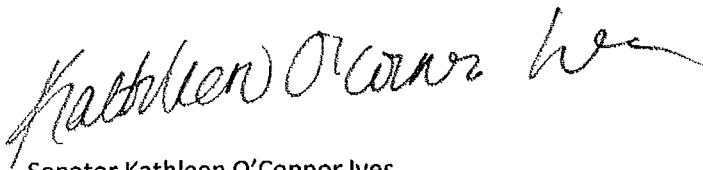
Even if most circuses did not treat elephants with such cruelty, elephants belong in environments that nurture their natural behavior and allow them to engage in their complex social networks, and circuses are certainly not such environments.

Thank you again, and we look forward to your continued support.

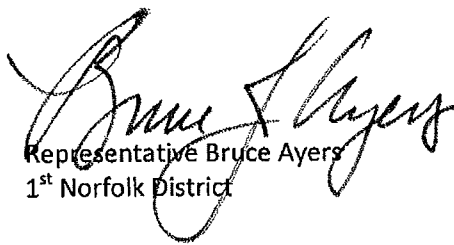
Sincerely,



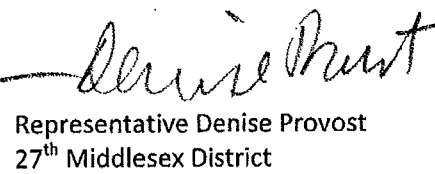
Representative Lori A. Ehrlich
House Chair of the Joint Committee
on Export Development



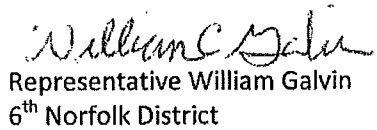
Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives
First Essex District



Representative Bruce Ayers
1st Norfolk District



Representative Denise Provost
27th Middlesex District



Representative William Galvin
6th Norfolk District



Representative Brian Ashe
2nd Hampden District



Representative Dylan Fernandes
Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket



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Representative Juana Matias
16th Essex District

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36th Middlesex District

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4th Middlesex District

Representative Mike Connelly
26th Middlesex District

Representative Daniel Donoghue
16th Worcester District

Representative David Rogers
24th Middlesex District

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1st Hampshire District

Representative Diana DiZoglio
14th Essex District

Representative David Linsky
5th Middlesex District


Representative Steven Ultrino
33rd Middlesex District

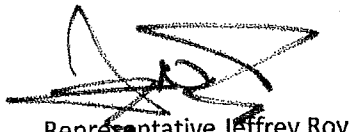
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17th Essex District


Representative Frank Smizik
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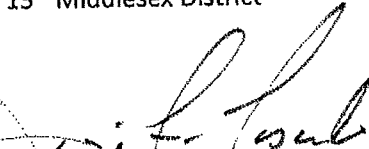
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7th Middlesex District

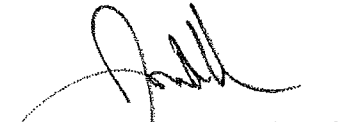
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19th Middlesex District

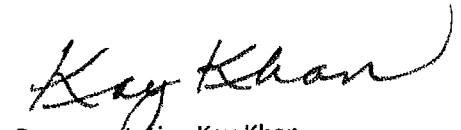

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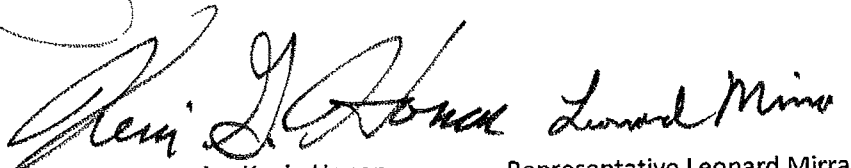

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Representative Joan Meschino
3rd Plymouth District



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9th Hampden District



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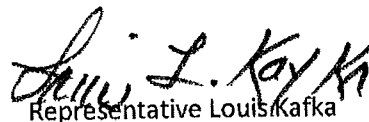

Representative Kay Khan
11th Middlesex District

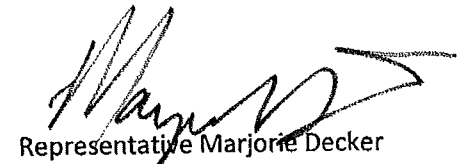

Representative Kevin Honan
17th Suffolk District

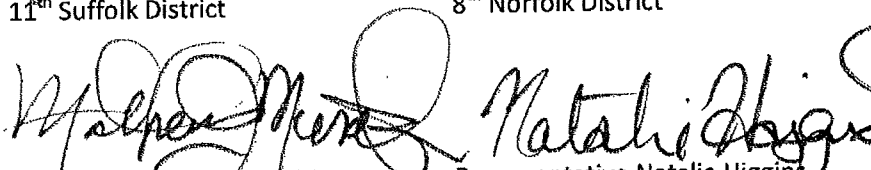

Representative Leonard Mirra
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Representative Linda Dean Campbell
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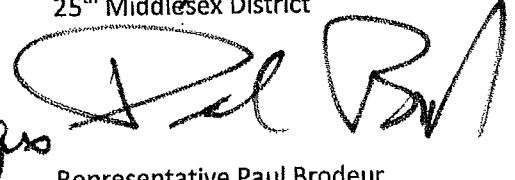

Representative Elizabeth Malia
11th Suffolk District

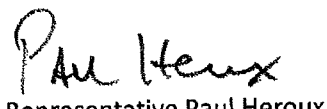

Representative Louis Kafka
8th Norfolk District

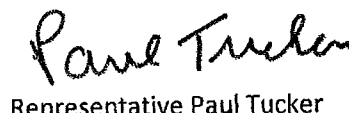

Representative Marjorie Decker
25th Middlesex District



Representative Mathew Muratore
1st Plymouth District

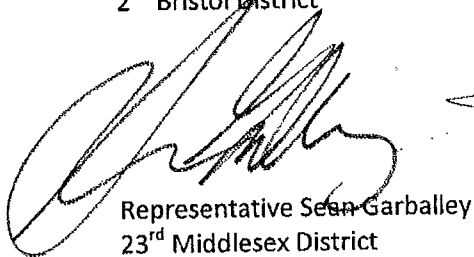

Representative Natalie Higgins
4th Worcester District

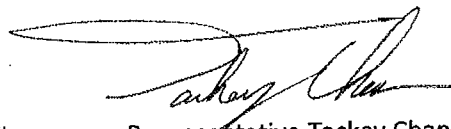

Representative Paul Brodeur
32nd Middlesex District

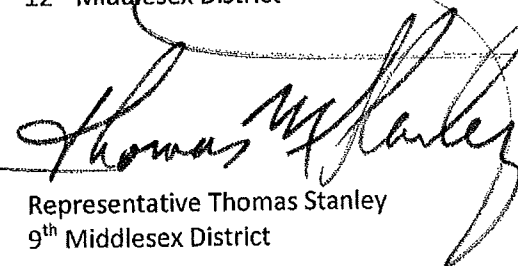

Representative Paul Heroux
2nd Bristol District



Representative Paul Tucker
7th Essex District


Representative Ruth Balser
12th Middlesex District



Representative Sean Garballey
23rd Middlesex District


Representative Tackey Chan
2nd Norfolk District



Representative Thomas Stanley
9th Middlesex District



Representative Jay Livingstone
8th Suffolk District



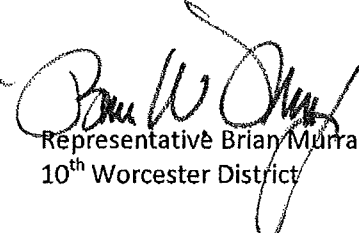
Representative Daniel Cahill
10th Essex District



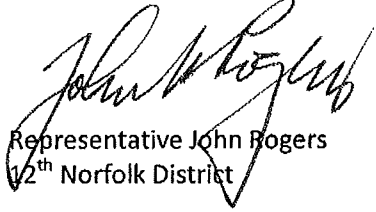
Representative James Cantwell
4th Plymouth District



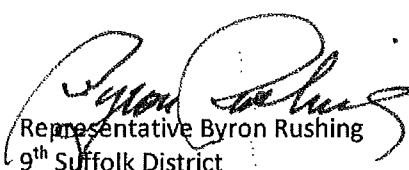
Representative Angelo D'Emilia
8th Plymouth District



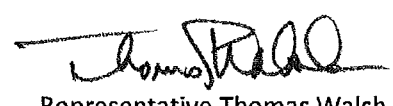
Representative Brian Murray
10th Worcester District



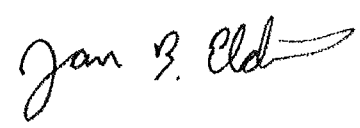
Representative John Rogers
12th Norfolk District



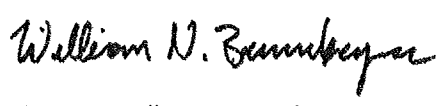
Representative Byron Rushing
9th Suffolk District



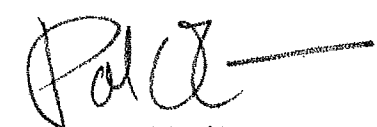
Representative Thomas Walsh
12th Essex District



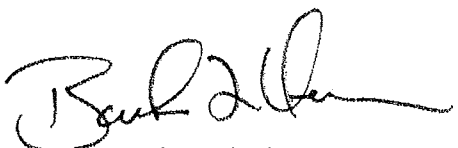
Senator Jamie Eldridge
Middlesex and Worcester District



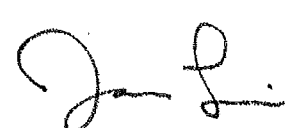
Senator William Brownsberger
Second Suffolk and Middlesex
District




Senator Patrick O'Connor
Plymouth and Norfolk District




Senator Barbara L'Italian
Second Essex and Middlesex District



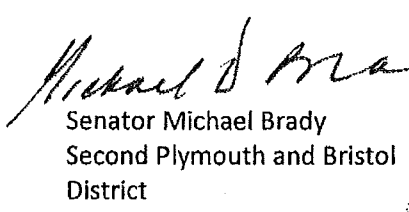
Senator Jason Lewis
Fifth Middlesex District



Senator Linda Dorcena Forry
First Suffolk District



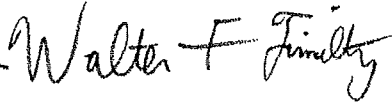
Senator Michael Barrett
Third Middlesex District



Senator Michael Brady
Second Plymouth and Bristol
District



Senator Patricia Jehlen
Second Middlesex District



Senator Walter Timilty
Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth District

Representative Chynah Tyler
7th Suffolk District

Representative John Mahoney
13th Worcester District

Representative Thomas Calter
12th Plymouth District

Representative Evandro Carvalho
5th Suffolk District

Representative Paul McMurtry
11th Norfolk District

Representative Denise Garlick
13th Norfolk District

Representative Jim O'Day
14th Worcester District

Representative Aaron Vega
5th Hampden District

Representative Alan Silvia
7th Bristol District

Representative Kate Hogan
3rd Middlesex District

Representative Geoff Diehl
7th Plymouth District

Representative Jim Lyons
18th Essex District

Representative Jim Dwyer
30th Middlesex District

Senator Cynthia Creem
First Middlesex and Norfolk
District

Senator Mark Montigny
Second Bristol and Plymouth
District