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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Animal Wellness Centers Announces Support for California Animal Protection Laws

“Dr. Annie” Lobbies Lawmakers in Sacramento

SACRAMENTO – Dr. Annie Harvilicz “Dr. Annie” traveled to Sacramento today to meet with state legislators on behalf of Animal Wellness Centers to support several animal protection laws and issues. The effort was coordinated by AWC friends The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®).

Dr. Annie, the firm’s Chief Medical Officer, stated: “On behalf of Animal Wellness Centers, I am urging the California legislature to support stronger penalties for animal neglect, to require accurate labeling of fur garments, to protect California horses from slaughter, and to oppose an expansion of the state's trophy hunt of bears.”

OPPOSE: PROPOSED EXPANSION OF BEAR TROPHY HUNT

AWC opposes a proposal by the California Department of Fish and Game to expand the state's trophy hunting of bears. The department's ill-advised proposal would expand trophy hunting in additional counties and allow more bears to be killed each season. It would also expand high-tech hound hunting of bears in the state, including authorizing the unsportsmanlike use of GPS collars that allow trophy hunters to track bears remotely, and "tip switches" that notify trophy hunters from afar when a bear has been treed.

SUPPORT: AB 1656 ACCURATE FUR LABELING

Assemblymembers Fiona Ma, D-San Francisco, and Ted Lieu, D-Torrance, proposed AB 1656 to protect consumers by requiring that all garments made with animal fur be accurately labeled. Recent investigations in the Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento areas found unlabeled fur jackets for sale at well-known stores, in several instances being described by the salespeople as fake fur.

Although a federal law governs labeling of fur apparel, a loophole allows those garments trimmed with fur valued at \$150 or less to remain unlabeled, often leaving consumers in the dark as to whether many fur-trimmed jackets and coats contain animal fur. AWC asks the legislature to pass AB 1656 and make California the sixth state to require fur labeling.



SUPPORT: PENALTIES FOR ANIMAL CRUELTY AND NEGLECT

AWC supports AB 2012, a bill introduced by Assemblymember Ted Lieu to increase penalties for animal neglect. While this crime currently is only punishable with a fine of up to \$20,000 and up to six months in jail, AB 2012 adds the possibility of one year of jail time in egregious neglect cases.

SUPPORT: HORSE SLAUGHTER RESOLUTION

AWC supports a resolution aimed at protecting California horses from slaughter for human consumption. Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, has proposed a joint legislative resolution asking the U.S. Congress to pass the Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act (H.R. 503/S. 727), bills that would prohibit the possession, transport, purchase and sale of horses in interstate or foreign commerce for slaughter for human consumption.

According to the HSUS, last year states across the country enacted 121 new laws for animals. During 2009, California legislators passed landmark bipartisan legislation, including upgrading penalties for dogfighting; protecting La Jolla's harbor seal habitat; prohibiting the cruel and unnecessary docking of cow's tails; and increasing fines on those who poach our state's wildlife. This year, a new California Animal Protection legislative caucus was formed and already boasts 25 members from both parties.

ABOUT ANIMAL WELLNESS CENTERS

Animal Wellness Centers LLC is a fast-growing companion-animal healthcare firm headquartered in Santa Monica, California. Its core business is veterinary services with a focus on comprehensive animal wellness designed to strengthen the human-animal bond. It is the exclusive retailer of Dr. Annie's™ brand products. Its flagship Center in Santa Monica's Ocean Park neighborhood is the world's first non-anthropomorphic companion-animal center offering full array of pet products, an education center, preventative care clinics and a social networking arena.

Annie Harvilicz, DVM, CVA ("Dr. Annie") is the Founder and Chief Medical Officer of AWC. She brings experience at leading centers for animal care throughout the world including extensive work on endangered species such as giant pandas, black rhinos, cheetahs, and elephants. She has appeared on the Discovery Channel's *Animal Precinct* television program during her tenure at the ASPCA's Animal Hospital in New York City. Her private practice has spanned across the country with high-profile clientele from New York to Los Angeles. She completed her DVM degree at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine where she served as President of the school's chapter of the AVMA. She is also the recipient of various awards and distinctions including, among others, the Sherrie Clark Compassion and Caring Award and the Tobey Award for special compassion for lost, abandoned, or homeless dogs. She is licensed to practice in



California, New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland and is certified in Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine.

ABOUT THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization — backed by 11 million Americans, or one of every 28. For more than a half-century, The HSUS has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education and hands-on programs. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty.

ABOUT THE ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is the first humane organization established in the Americas and serves as the nation's leading voice for animal welfare. One million supporters strong, the ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As a 501[c][3] not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. The ASPCA, which is headquartered in New York City, offers a wide range of programs, including a mobile clinic outreach initiative, its own humane law enforcement team, and a groundbreaking veterinary forensics team and mobile animal CSI unit.

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