

2014 -- H 8310

=====
LC005836
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

**RESPECTFULLY URGING CIRCUSES AND OTHER TRAVELING SHOWS TO
ELIMINATE THE USE OF BULLHOOKS AND SIMILAR DEVICES FOR TRAINING
ELEPHANTS**

Introduced By: Representatives Serpa, Ackerman, Gallison, Nunes, and McLaughlin

Date Introduced: June 11, 2014

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Elephants are highly intelligent and family-oriented animals that have
2 memories that span many years. At birth they weigh between 200-250 pounds and by maturity,
3 they will consume between 300 to 400 pounds of food per day; and

4 WHEREAS, Thousands of Asian and African elephants are used to entertain in circuses
5 and other traveling shows across the country; and

6 WHEREAS, Even when born in captivity, elephants are wild animals, and they must be
7 trained to perform in circus acts or shows; and

8 WHEREAS, The tradition of training elephants goes back some 4,000 years, with a
9 variety of methods used over the decades; and

10 WHEREAS, Methods such as positive encouragement and using snacks as rewards has
11 been effective and successful for many trainers, however, some elephant training includes
12 utilizing bullhooks to force the elephants to perform; and

13 WHEREAS, A bullhook, also called an ankus, guide, elephant goad, or elephant hook, is
14 a steel rod with a metal hook and tip, and has a handle that is typically two to three feet long
15 made of plastic or wood; and

16 WHEREAS, The bullhook is designed for the purpose of punishing elephants with the
17 hook being used to apply varying degrees of pressure on an elephant's body, causing the elephant
18 to move away from the source of discomfort; and

19 WHEREAS, Alternative methods of elephant management, called Protected Contact,

1 which rely only on positive reinforcement training and not the use of a bullhook to manage
2 elephants also allows for the safe handling and management of elephants; now, therefore be it

3 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island Providence
4 Plantations hereby expresses concern regarding the treatment of captive elephants in circuses and
5 traveling shows due to the use of the bullhook and harmful training practices; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That this House hereby recognizes that the use of the bullhook causes pain
7 to elephants and urges circuses and other traveling shows to eliminate the use of bullhooks and
8 other harmful training practices on elephants; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
10 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of
11 Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA).

=====
LC005836
=====