

BILL MAHER

November 22, 2010

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500-0049

Dear Mr. President:

I'm writing on behalf of my friends at PETA regarding a ritual that keeps countless Americans glued to their TV sets. In front of rolling television cameras, two cute birds blink their eyes in the glare of flashing lights. After their 15 minutes of fame are over, they will be banished to obscurity, trading in the limelight for a cramped dive, forgotten by the masses.

No, I don't mean the hapless girls chased and discarded by "The Situation" on *Jersey Shore*. I'm referring to the two confused turkeys who are pardoned by the president each year before Thanksgiving Day. The promise of "retirement" for those turkeys has proved to be as empty as a Cher "farewell" tour. In recent years, turkeys have simply been shuffled from the pardoning ceremony to displays at pseudo-sanctuaries or theme parks, and many have died less than a year later, before the following year's turkeys have even made it to the Rose Garden. McDonald's so-called "Happy Meals" have a longer shelf life.

I propose a New Rule: From now on, let's bring credibility to the ceremony and genuine compassion to "pardoned" turkeys by sending them to a real sanctuary. After all, turkeys have it hard enough. The overwhelming majority of them are bred and drugged to grow faster than the income gap. They suffer broken legs, heart attacks, and other health problems that can multiply as they exceed the short life spans that the breeders intend. PETA has already lined up a reputable sanctuary that can offer this year's pardoned turkeys a clean and comfortable retirement that includes veterinary care and socialization.

I realize that in this election year it hasn't been easy for a Democrat to stand up for freedom, but it can be easy for everyone—including Democrats, Republicans, Libertarians, and yes, even Tea Baggers—to stand up for compassion. I thank you for your consideration, Mr. President, and hope to hear that you agree with me.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Maher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.