

# **BOB BARKER**

Bob Barker Productions Inc.

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June 24, 2013

The Honorable Gordon Fox  
Speaker of the House  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. Fox,

I urge you to allow a vote in the Judiciary Committee and then a vote of the entire House on H.B. 5853, which would prohibit bullhooks—sharp devices that resemble fireplace pokers and are used to hook, jab, and strike elephants on the most sensitive parts of their bodies—as well as the prolonged chaining of elephants.

Over the years, I have learned of incident after incident of the tremendous suffering that elephants in circuses endure because of bullhook abuse. For instance, PETA's [undercover investigation](#) of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus showed plainly that elephants are viciously and repeatedly struck with bullhooks backstage just before performances in order to intimidate them and remind them that they have to do as they're told pronto or suffer the painful consequences. Just a few weeks ago, sworn affidavits from arena workers made clear yet again that backstage bullhook beatings by people associated with Ringling performances continue. And shocking photographs released by a former Ringling trainer and published by the [Washington Post](#) show baby elephants at Ringling's breeding center undergoing violent training sessions at its Florida compound. The frightened infants, removed prematurely from their mothers, are bound with ropes and wrestled by several adult men into physically difficult and, to them, confounding positions. These infants scream, cry, and struggle as they are stretched out, pulled to the ground, jabbed with bullhooks, and shocked with electric prods. Please take a few minutes to view these photographs and the video footage. You will never listen to Ringling's public relations people again.

Nothing—and certainly not a few minutes of entertainment—justifies abusing these extremely sensitive, intelligent, and majestic animals with painful bullhooks, which leave puncture wounds and scarring. Nor is there any justification for chaining them for hours, even days—Ringling's own transportation records show that they keep elephants in tight chains for up to four consecutive days—which results in serious foot problems and painful arthritis, the leading reasons why captive elephants are euthanized. That's why zoos have moved away from these practices: Most accredited zoos with elephants now handle them without bullhooks and without chaining. It's time we stop tolerating such abysmally cruel practices in the circus. Can I count on you to allow H.B. 5853 to go to a vote in the Judiciary Committee and then to a full floor vote?

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Bob Barker