

KATE DEL CASTILLO

January 7, 2014

The Honorable Carlos A. Giménez
Office of the Mayor
Stephen P. Clark Center
111 N.W. First St., 29th Fl.
Miami, FL 33128

Dear Mayor Giménez:

I hope you are well. Florida has the strongest, clearest law in the country against exhibiting crippled animals, which gives officials the ability to intervene in situations such as Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus' infamous use of ailing elephants. As Ringling begins performing in Miami on January 9, I urge you to ensure that this law is enforced and that no elephants who suffer from painful, crippling ailments are permitted to perform in the circus' shows.

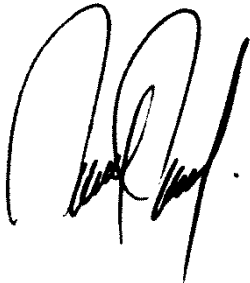
Numerous expert reports make it clear that Ringling routinely forces crippled elephants to perform in the unit that will appear in Miami. In fact, according to two veterinarians with nearly a century of experience working with exotic animals between them, all the elephants with Ringling's Red Unit show signs of arthritis. Assan (aka "Aussan" or "Assam"), for example, is "clinically lame to the point of being crippled" and appears to be in pain. They have also determined that Siam is "clearly lame" and "in pain and having problems keeping up with the other elephants" and should be removed from the road immediately.

Arthritis and foot-related problems are extremely painful for these animals and are also the leading reasons for euthanasia of elephants in the United States. The long hours and even days spent in cramped boxcars during travel, coupled with the painful and unnatural circus tricks that they are forced to perform, make the elephants used by Ringling susceptible to arthritis. They never get a reprieve from physical pain. When they are not standing on their heads or straining their hind legs while performing circus tricks, they are kept chained, unable to move comfortably or act on their most basic instincts.

Since Florida Statutes section 877.16 prohibits "exhibit[ing] for pay or compensation any crippled . . . animal in any circus," I urge you to ensure that this law is enforced during Ringling's stay in the county. Please forbid Ringling from forcing any crippled elephants to perform. We'd be happy to arrange for an inspection with an independent veterinarian.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope you'll take a minute to watch [the video that I just narrated about the abuse of animals in the circus](#). Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Kate del Castillo