

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 3/30/09
SB 221

March 28, 2009
Attention: House Judiciary Committee
SB221

Mr. Chairman, Members of the House Judiciary Committee

I attended the hearing for SB221 to oppose it. I was doing some research on the internet for "Hoarding" articles and came across this one. I thought you might be interested in reading it.

Thank you
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5B221

Animal Hoarding: Fabricating and Criminalizing Mental Illness

By ESaunders

Its the new buzzword in the media for animal abuse, "animal horders" sometimes called "animal collectors" and these terms are currently being written into prospective animal limit legislation across the US. 'Animal hoarding' is being labelled a mental illness, often with a reference to the DSM-IV which is the Diagnostic Standards Manual used by certified Psychologists and Psychiatrists across North America. There's a problem though.

Its a lie.

Animal hoarding is not a recognized diagnosable mental illness with the DSM-IV. Neither is Hoarding, which is the response normally provided when the Animal Hoarding claim is debunked. Hoarding is one, and only one, of many possible symptoms of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Hoarding in a clinical context is perhaps more easily described as extreme, obsessed, compulsive collecting. To provide an example, hoarding is not a few boxes of old newspapers, hoarding is stacks of newspapers that prevent one from moving about the house and can crush one to death if toppled. (true example)

Hoarding does not make one OCD, but OCD can make one hoard. Claiming a person is a hoarder of any kind without the accompanying, medical diagnosis of OCD is like claiming someone is schizophrenic for talking to themselves looking at the shelves in the grocery store aisle.

The current body of literature on animal hoarding has not been studied and written by mental health professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists, it has been predominantly written by veterinarians. The now defunct (1997-2006) Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium is maintained only by veterinarian Dr Gary Patronek. Although 2 psychologists and a psychiatrist were members of the original group, none of their names appear as authors/editors on the research articles hosted on the Hoarding of Animals Research Consortium's website. Considering that publication is a huge part of any researcher's career, it is telling that their names are not listed as contributing authors of some kind with the exception of a single paper in which they are listed as participants, not authors or editors. Further factors of concern are the independence of the research.

- Tufts University received 2 donations from the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in 2006, \$20,000 and \$29,000, with the \$29,000 donation going to the Department of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Gary Patronek's department
- Tufts University Department of Veterinary Medicine received a \$31,500 donation from the HSUS in 2007, again Dr. Gary Patronek's department

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- HSUS executive members and directors listed as contributing authors and editors of some of the publications, specifically Colin Berry & Randy Lockwood

What makes this even worse is that it reverses the long-time trend of mental illness as a mitigating circumstance towards criminal guilt, not as evidence of criminal guilt. Are we looking at a change in the justice system from 'not guilty by reason of mental defect' to 'guilty by reason of mental defect'. Do we really want to go down this road as a society?

- Do we want the law to be able to classify us as mentally ill and therefore guilty based on an arbitrary number codified into law? Should the law define or diagnose mental illness?
- Should a veterinarian or Animal Control officer be able to label you as mentally ill? Should they have the legal authority? Should they have the authority in court to testify as to your mental state as does a mental health professional?

These are the questions before us and the implications are frightening.

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