

SURVEY FINDS IOWA VOTERS OPPOSE PROHIBITING SECRET ANIMAL-ABUSE VIDEOS

March, 22, 2011 by Jennifer Jacobs

A majority of Iowa voters oppose prohibiting whistleblowers from taking photographs or video footage at animal facilities, according to a survey funded by a lobbying group.

Sixty-five percent of voters oppose the bill before the Iowa Legislature, while 21 percent support it, says a survey conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc.

The survey was paid for by the Humane Society of the United States, a Washington, D.C.-based animal protection group that is lobbying against the bill.

Fourteen percent of Iowa voters are undecided about the secret-footage bill, [House File 589](#), the survey found.

The opposition holds true regardless of political party, according to the survey. Among Democrats, 70 percent oppose it; 62 percent of Republicans oppose it; and 64 percent of independents oppose it, the survey says.

The survey question was: “The Iowa Legislature is currently considering a bill that would prohibit whistleblowers from taking photographs or video footage at factory farms, puppy mills and other animal use facilities. Do you support or oppose this legislation?”

Farmers are pushing for such a law, saying activists have deliberately cast their operations in a negative light and let cameras roll rather than reporting abuse immediately.

It was introduced after animal rights groups nationally released undercover video footage of cows being shocked, pigs being beaten and male chicks being ground alive.

The Republican-led House approved the bill, 65-27, last week. The Senate will give it further consideration.

First conviction for “animal facility fraud” would be an aggravated misdemeanor; a second would be a Class D felony. A variety of Iowa agribusiness groups are in favor of the bill.

The survey of 625 Iowa voters was conducted statewide March 17-19. The margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points. It was released publicly on Monday.