

U.S. Public Opinion of Animal Protection Goals, Activities, and Advocates (Phase 2)



March 2006

Results from focus groups and one-on-one interviews conducted in late 2005 and early 2006 by the National Council for Animal Protection (NCAP). Phases one and two of the project have been funded by NCAP members and carried out by the Humane Research Council (HRC).

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Note: Additional appendices including research participants' demographic and other details and select verbatim comments are provided in a separate file.

This report is intended only for NCAP members in good standing and their board members or current employees. As with the phase one report, any unauthorized sharing of this document or any of the data contained herein with non-members is a violation of NCAP membership and is strictly prohibited. If you have any questions about this policy or use of the research data, please contact Joan Dempsey (603-239-6446, jdempsey@netryders.com) or Ché Green (206-852-4848, cgreen@humanereseach.org).

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In 2003, members of the National Council for Animal Protection (NCAP, formerly Summit for the Animals) initiated a long-term research project with the Humane Research Council (HRC). Goals included investigating public awareness and opinions of animal protection (AP) activities, including the perceived image, credibility, and effectiveness of the AP movement in the United States. The project began with collecting and analyzing all available secondary data on these topics and others from a variety of sources and dating back more than two decades. Results from this analysis were presented at the annual NCAP meeting in 2004 and are available on NCAP's online membership forum.

Phase one of the primary research project was completed in April 2005 and involved a large-scale public opinion survey that provided baseline data on key metrics of importance to AP advocates. The data also provided a means of segmenting the adult US public into distinct profiles based on their favorability toward AP, support for the movement's goals, and respect for animal advocates. Results from the phase one public opinion survey were presented at the annual NCAP meeting in 2005 and are also available on NCAP's online membership forum.

Phase two of the project used the support profiles and other findings from phase one to further investigate public opinion through focus groups and in-depth, one-on-one telephone interviews. HRC conducted the research and, with the help of NCAP members, analyzed the data from both phases for this report. Also provided with this report is a large set of verbatim comments directly from phase two research participants. The report includes a detailed interpretation of the qualitative phase two results and also links those findings to the representative data from phase one. The final phase three of the research project (as proposed) would involve another quantitative survey focused on specific behavioral and attitudinal data of potential use to NCAP and its membership.

METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANT SELECTION

HRC personnel conducted a series of eight (8) focus groups and fifteen (15) one-on-one telephone interviews, for a total of 55 participants. The following table provides a summary of the phase two qualitative research, including geographical coverage and organized by support profile. For details on research participants, including genders, ages, etc., please refer to separate appendix file.

Focus Group Locations and Participant Details

Location	Support Segment	Additional Details
1. Sacramento	Strong Supporters	Mixed gender, 18-34, Pilot group (triad)
2. Minneapolis	Mixed Supporters	Males, 25-64, Mostly qualified supporters
3. Louisville	Mixed Supporters	Females, 25-44, Mostly qualified supporters
4. Albuquerque	Mixed Supporters	Females, 18-64, Mostly qualified supporters
5. Portland	Mixed Supporters	Females, 18-34, Pilot group (triad)
6. Albuquerque	Neutrals and Conflicted	Mixed gender, 18-44, One conflicted person
7. Minneapolis	Neutrals	Mixed gender, 25-64, Bachelor's degree or higher
8. Louisville	Strong Detractors	Males, 18-44, Bachelor's degree or higher (triad)

Interviewee Locations and Participant Details

Location	Support Segment	Additional Details
1. Virginia	Strong Supporter	Female, 18-24, High school graduate
2. N. California	Strong Supporter	Female, 25-34, Some college, no degree
3. S. California	Strong Supporter	Female, 25-34, Some college, no degree
4. Florida	Strong Supporter	Female, 25-34, Bachelor's degree
5. Kansas	Qualified Supporter	Female, Over 65, Some college, no degree
6. Massachusetts	Qualified Supporter	Female, 45-54, Graduate degree
7. New Hampshire	Qualified Supporter	Female, 35-44, Some college, no degree
8. Oregon	Qualified Supporter	Female, 25-34, Associate degree
9. Texas	Qualified Supporter	Female, 18-24, Some college, no degree
10. Virginia	Qualified Supporter	Male, 25-34, Graduate degree
11. Illinois	Qualified Supporter	Male, 25-34, Bachelor's degree
12. Virginia	Neutral	Female, 55-64, Some college, no degree
13. Texas	Neutral	Female, 35-44, Doctorate degree
14. Minnesota	Neutral	Male, 45-54, Graduate degree
15. Ohio	Neutral	Male, 35-44, Some college, no degree

The phase two focus groups were held in a variety of locations (see table on page 1) in order to provide some geographical diversity and also sufficient pools of potential participants. Physical locations included hotel and library conference rooms and one restaurant; facilities were selected based on proximity to participants, cost, and availability of space. All of the primary focus groups were videotaped and the pilot focus groups and interviews were audio recorded for reference purposes and to extract verbatim comments. All research participants were provided cash or similar incentives for their time, including \$50 for most focus group participants and \$25 for all one-on-one interviewees.

Research participants were selected with the assistance of Survey Sampling International (SSI) and its online research panel of about six million US residents. Participants for the pilot focus groups in Sacramento and Portland were recruited without SSI, using “convenience” methods including extended friends and family members not involved in animal protection work. Nearly all of the primary (non-pilot) focus groups included an acceptable number of participants, ranging from 5-7 individuals per group. Recruiting was difficult in a couple of focus group locations, resulting in lower participation for those groups, but the quality of data collection did not appear to suffer as a result.

HRC selected participants by creating brief surveys to screen SSI panelists and profile them based on their answers to several questions about support for animal protection. The focus groups typically included participants belonging to the same AP support profile to narrow the discussion points, limit disagreements, etc. In most cases, the focus groups were further restricted to exclusively female or male participants, people of similar ages, or participants having received more formal education (see the previous tables or the appendix for details). HRC developed a basic discussion guide and adapted it for the different types of participants included in each group. Participants were not selected or screened according to ethnicity, but they seemed to reflect relatively diverse ethnic backgrounds. Each focus group and interview was moderated by a trained professional using the semi-structured discussion guide.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1. Most U.S. adults have only a limited understanding of animal protection (AP) issues, advocates, and activities, with somewhat more awareness of local compared to national issues.

- In phase one, most people said they discuss AP “every few months” or less frequently, and that they are only “somewhat” or “not at all” knowledgeable of AP efforts. About one in every four US adults could not think of a word to describe the term “animal protection.”
- Phase two results suggest that awareness of AP issues is even less than indicated in phase one. The public’s perception is generally limited to local shelters, wildlife rescue groups, and egregious animal abuse situations that become news in the local community. Examples often included groups like local humane societies and issues such as companion animal hoarding.
- People infrequently mention anything other than the mainstream media (television news, magazines, newspapers, etc.) as sources of information about AP activities. They very rarely receive information directly from AP advocates and/or have personal interactions or discussions about AP-related issues with family, friends, and colleagues.
- The public’s lack of knowledge and awareness is not limited to AP, but instead seems to reflect a much broader disengagement from all social issues. To garner public attention, social issues must be either very visible or very relevant, and for most people AP is neither.

2. Public support for treating animals humanely is very high, but there is more concern for situations perceived as “urgent,” typically involving companion animals and wildlife.

- In phase one, more than nine in ten people said that the humane treatment of animals is “very” or “somewhat” important to them personally. For almost everybody, there is support for treating animals humanely, reducing their suffering, and protecting them from harm. Many people also associate treating animals humanely with being a generally good and compassionate person.
- The AP issues that elicit the most public concern are framed by people’s limited knowledge of AP, with companion animals and wildlife mentioned most frequently. Specifically, people express the most concern for situations where there is a sense of urgency for the animals involved, in particular rescuing animals from abusive situations and protecting endangered species.
- When asked to describe their reasons for supporting AP, most in the support segments referred to being around animals when young. Typically this included companion animals, but also involved other experiences with wildlife and occasionally farm animals. AP detractors and neutrals did not have similar experiences or described them with much less enthusiasm.

3. Public support for the humane treatment of animals is also qualified in important ways by views that some animals are already protected or that some suffering is “necessary.”

- As stated previously, there is most public concern for “urgent” or “dire” situations, but for many people this level of concern does not extend to “institutional” animals such as those on factory farms or in laboratories. This is due in part to the belief that institutional animals are already protected because they are “closer to the people who care for them;” in many cases, people also believe there are already laws in place for domesticated animals.
- A significant number of people also believe that such institutional animals are mostly raised and killed humanely, and that cruelty or suffering is a rare occurrence. Many people who acknowledge that suffering occurs regularly or occasionally for institutional animals tolerate a minimal amount of suffering as unavoidable or “necessary,” and say it is less objectionable because those animals are born or raised “for a certain purpose.”

- With the exception of “unnecessarily” abusing an animal or causing an animal harm, most people default to the belief that it is a personal choice to “own pets” or to engage in other behaviors that impact animals. In many cases this even extended to “unnecessary” uses of animals including wearing real animal fur or testing cosmetics on rats or mice.

4. The public has mixed opinions of AP groups and advocates; many people believe AP is a noble cause, but many also seem to feel that advocates can be pushy or extreme.

- In phase one, despite strong support for treating animals humanely, most people seemed to have somewhat mixed views of AP advocates and organizations. A majority of people said they have only “some, very little, or no respect” for AP advocates, and nearly half of the public said they perceive the AP movement as “extreme.”
- Comments in phase two showed that most people seem to view AP advocates (individuals and organizations) as well-intentioned and committed to a noble pursuit. Some people, however, describe AP activists as being indignant, self-righteous, or “pushy,” or say that they want to “impose their will” on others.
- Even very strong AP supporters do not consider themselves “activists,” and the term carries a negative connotation. The term “advocate” seems slightly preferred, but is still perceived unfavorably by some. There is evidence that some AP supporters are hesitant to be more supportive out of concern that their behaviors are inconsistent with the activist “lifestyle” and/or that they would feel hypocritical.
- Phase two participants frequently mentioned having positive opinions of local organizations, primarily wildlife rescue groups and companion animal shelters. One example that came up frequently was the show *Animal Cops* (on Animal Planet) and related programming, with supporters, neutrals, and detractors alike praising the program and similar rescue work.
- People in phase two also regularly mentioned People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), with most seeming to be critical of the organization’s goals, tactics, or both. PETA was generally associated with extremeness, but most people recognized extreme individuals and groups to be the exception rather than the norm for the overall AP movement.
- In phase two, it was also clear that people have very diverse and complicated views of what they consider an extreme belief, goal, or tactic. These views are often framed by publicly held stereotypes of AP advocates and people’s personal experiences. Perceptions of extremeness also differ according to support segment, but some tactics and ideologies are considered imposing or extreme by nearly everyone.

5. Many people consider some AP-related beliefs or goals (as they perceive them) to be too extreme, including placing animals above humans and restricting choices available to humans as a means of protecting animals.

- In phase two, detractors, neutrals, and even some supporters went beyond AP tactics to describe the perceived AP goals and beliefs that they consider too extreme.
- Even among some supporters, people often mentioned the criticism that AP advocates prioritize non-human animals over humans. Specifically, some people say that AP advocates do not care about humans; these participants stated that they do not support AP advocates for that reason. In some cases, people feel AP advocates do not respect the “natural order” or “food chain” that places humans over animals.
- The notion that AP advocates wish to “impose their will” relates to many people believing that the AP movement seeks to tell people how to live or behave. The US public is clearly very resistant to any restriction on one’s personal choices or freedom regarding how to think, what to buy, etc., and such restrictions seem to be considered extreme by most people.

- For some AP detractors and neutrals who describe themselves as “conservatives,” AP gets less support because they associate it with liberalism in general.

6. There is some differentiation for most people between specific tactics that are viewed as acceptable and legitimate versus those that are considered extreme, ineffective, or “juvenile.”

- Phase one did not address specific AP tactics and, as already mentioned, most people have only a limited view of AP activities. In phase two, however, most participants eventually mentioned some AP activity that they consider extreme or “going too far.”
- AP tactics that go too far are often those that are illegal or that people perceive as being sensational (i.e., more focused on media attention than protecting animals). The stereotypical act of throwing paint on fur coats was mentioned frequently and criticized in every instance, while actions like animal releases or lab break-ins were mentioned occasionally. Many people seemed to feel that such actions are counterproductive and hurting the public's view of the AP movement.
- Most people initially say that they support legal demonstrations and protests (i.e., rallies, marches, etc.), but upon talking further they seem to have a negative visceral reaction to them. There is some resistance to anyone approaching them on the street, be it in the context of a protest or public outreach. However, in general there is strong support for educating the public about AP issues, and many people suggest education as an alternative to extreme tactics.
- There is some public support for legislation (and litigation) to protect animals, but this support is limited to laws that still allow personal human freedom. There is little support for laws that outright ban any practice or behavior, and some people seem to be against new laws on principle.
- Overall, except for strong detractors, phase two participants recognize that only a minority of the AP movement engages in extreme tactics. Despite an inability to articulate the diversity of AP organizations and activities, most people know that a broad spectrum exists. AP supporters and neutrals associate only a minority of AP tactics with extremeness, although some say those tactics are the only ones they hear about.

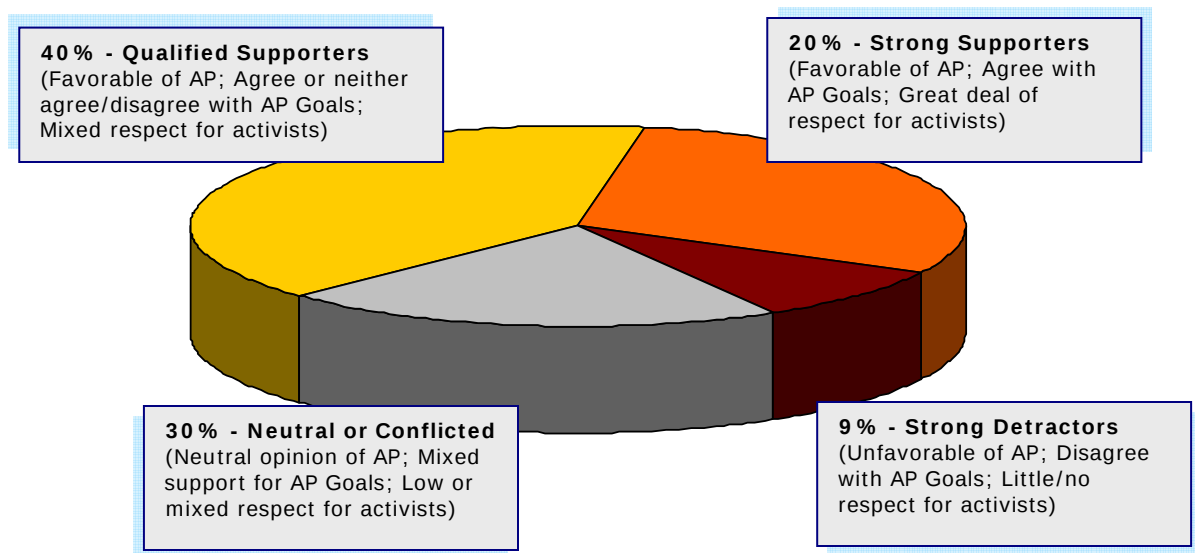
7. Phase two participants provided several implicit and explicit suggestions regarding how to garner more public attention to and support for AP, including:

- Nearly everyone (from all segments) supports using legal and orderly means to protect animals from any abuse or “unnecessary” suffering. There is tremendous public support for any animal in an urgent or abusive situation, which may extend to institutional animals if positioned correctly.
- Conversely, nearly everyone denounces illegal and confrontational tactics, broad restrictions on personal freedom, and any hint of placing animals above humans. Deemphasizing these aspects may increase support for AP, particularly among neutrals and detractors.
- There is evidence of greater support for local AP efforts and organizations, in part because those activities have a more visible or tangible outcome. Seeing a specific positive result was regularly mentioned as a prerequisite to having greater support for AP.
- There is some indication that people associate the term “animal protection” with keeping individual animals from harm and suffering. Although somewhat vague, the term (“protection”) seems slightly preferred to “rights” or “welfare” for most people because of this association.
- Many AP supporters asked for simple changes or ways to support protecting animals that they could easily incorporate into their lives or do from home.

3. PHASE TWO CONTEXT AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In the first phase of the NCAP public opinion study, the primary objective was to provide a snapshot of public opinion on a wide range of AP-related issues from a representative sample of the adult US population. The results provided a baseline understanding of public opinion regarding AP and a starting point from which to consider further research on specific areas of interest to NCAP members. The phase one survey and analysis uncovered several distinct segments among US adults based on their opinions about AP, including overall favorability toward the issue, support for the movement's goals, and respect for advocates.

Phase one respondents were profiled according to these three defining characteristics and then categorized into the "AP support profiles" identified in the chart below. The chart also indicates approximately how much of the adult US population currently falls into each segment.



These segments provide a meaningful and pragmatic way to think of the US population and were also used as the basis for selecting phase two research participants. The focus groups and interviews were composed of mostly AP supporters (some strong, but mostly qualified), who arguably represent the most persuadable target audience for AP advocates. We also conducted research with other support segments on a selective basis, and with people of particular interest such as young adults or more educated individuals. It is important to recognize, however, that **the AP support segments from phase one are artificial constructs based on quantitative analysis**. In phase two, these segments were less clearly defined, and some people appear to belong to more than one segment when discussing different animal issues, species, or contexts.

For phase two, the overall goal was to gain a deeper understanding of public opinion about AP to both validate and expand upon the previous findings. The phase two research objectives were discussed and loosely ranked at the 2005 NCAP annual meeting in Chicago. The objectives were then refined by HRC and the NCAP research committee into the following partial list of primary research questions:

- ❖ What initial associations do people have with AP activities, goals, and groups?
- ❖ How do people become aware of or learn about these activities, goals, and groups?
- ❖ What are the primary drivers of support for AP and how did current supporters experience them?
- ❖ How can those and other drivers be encouraged to further increase support for AP and persuade people to take action for animals?
- ❖ How do people view the various ideologies and tactics of AP groups and individual advocates, and how do those opinions differ by support segment?
- ❖ What are the primary barriers to achieving greater support for AP?
- ❖ How can those barriers be addressed to break down resistance to AP among detractors and bolster support among neutrals and qualified supporters?
- ❖ Why are some tactics or groups viewed as extreme, even by many AP supporters, and to what extent does this perception impact the entire movement?
- ❖ Why do people with higher levels of formal education appear less supportive of AP?
- ❖ How does support for AP relate to one's views about other social and personal issues?

Research findings related to these questions and others are detailed in the following sections of this report, including results and analysis covering both phases of research.

4. TOP-OF-MIND (UNAIDED) ASSOCIATIONS WITH ANIMAL PROTECTION

A distinct advantage of qualitative research methods such as those used in phase two is that they permit top-of-mind or “unaided” responses to important questions about AP. These included people’s answers to general and open questions such as, “What does AP mean to you?” or “What types of activities are included under AP?,” with little prompting given by interviewers. These unaided responses provided context for the phase two findings that follow by reminding us that most people have only a limited or vague understanding of AP. The following points also help clarify some of the phase one quantitative findings that underlie our basic understanding of the public’s support for perceived AP issues and advocates. Also refer to Section 7 for a more complete discussion of reactions to different terms, such as “animal rights” and “animal welfare.”

WHAT UNAIDED ASSOCIATIONS DO PEOPLE HAVE WITH THE CONCEPT OF “ANIMAL PROTECTION?”

In the phase one report, we concluded that the US-based animal protection movement and most individual organizations do not have strong “brands” with the public. Indeed, it appears that most people have only partially formed opinions of AP groups and activities, regardless of how supportive they are in general.

In phase one, respondents were asked to list the three words that first come to mind when they hear the term “animal protection,” “animal rights,” or “animal welfare,” with only one term presented to each respondent. **About one in every 4 or 5 US adults (17-27%) could not think of a word to describe the terms.** Similarly, in phase two many of the participants had to be prompted and provided with specific examples before being able to articulate anything meaningful about the issues that fall under AP.

- ❖ [Is it difficult for people to figure out where they stand on AP?] “An absolute majority of people wouldn’t have an opinion. Until we started talking like this, I didn’t have a concrete opinion (about AP). Unless you bring it up in a big discussion for an hour or two, you’re just going to say you’re for animal rights.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 35-44; Web developer]

US adults, therefore, often do not have *any* immediate associations with AP, which clearly presents animal advocates with a challenge, but also an opportunity. Conceptually, animal protection resonated as strongly with phase two participants as it did in the phase one survey results. **There is widespread support across all segments of the population for treating animals humanely, reducing their suffering, and protecting them from cruelty or harm.** The notion of protecting animals is viewed as an intrinsically worthy and noble cause. However, the public’s basic associations with AP are limited in important ways and most people have only a narrow view of what groups and activities fall within the scope of AP in the US.

- ❖ “Animals are my family to me... I don’t think animals should be allowed to be abused or used in any unnatural way.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 25-34; Associate degree; Retail Sales]
- ❖ “That you don’t want them to be abused, that there are laws in place for it. Not quite as extreme as PETA, but you don’t want to see anybody hurt.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 45-54; Graduate degree; Nurse educator]
- ❖ “Not being cruel to animals. Protection of animals from being killed, at the pound, or overpopulation.” [Neutral; Male; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Loss Prevention]
- ❖ “I’d say it (animal protection) means ensuring that animals are being treated as they should be and they’re not being taken advantage of like with animal testing and that sort of thing.” [Strong supporter; Female; 25-34; Bachelor's degree; Accountant]

WHAT UNAIDED ASSOCIATIONS DO PEOPLE HAVE WITH SPECIFIC AP ADVOCATES, GOALS, AND ACTIVITIES?

As we might expect given the public's lack of immediate associations with AP in general, most people also have trouble identifying AP organizations or articulating their goals and activities. This was clear from the phase one results, but even more evident among phase two research participants, most of whom could not name a specific group. For those that could name or describe an AP group, the unaided responses most frequently heard included local groups such as companion animal shelters (humane societies and SPCAs) and wildlife rescue groups. Phase two participants only very rarely mentioned the names of NCAP members (as of January 2006) or other national AP organizations, with the exception of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which came up frequently.

- ❖ "I really can't think of any (AP groups) at the moment." [Qualified supporter; Female; Over 65; Some college, no degree; Retired from the USPS]
- ❖ "When they said 'animal protection' (in the screener survey), I really thought about the local shelters and the people who go out and look into animal cruelty calls and take animals away that are being abused." [Strong Supporter; Female; 35-44; Unemployed]
- ❖ "I was thinking everything from zoos and conservation things to PETA to shelters that are there for animals, anything along those lines." [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]
- ❖ "My original interpretation (of 'animal protection') was just the habitat protection for wild animals that are endangered." [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ (I think of an AP advocate as) "someone who is deeply caring. There are some who go overboard to some extreme. But someone who cares deeply for the animals and will do what they have to, to keep them protected, within legal limits and reason." [Strong supporter; Female; 45-54; Some college, no degree; Homemaker]
- ❖ "I was thinking of the people that pour the paint on the people wearing the fur coats. That's kind of what popped into my head." [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ [What does the 'animal protection movement' mean to you? What do you think of?] "Wacko is the word that comes to mind." [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]

Most people, regardless of support level, have a similarly limited understanding of the diverse goals and activities that fall under the umbrella of animal protection. When asked what AP organizations do or to describe their goals, most participants struggled to come up with an answer apart from something definitional like "protecting all animals." When they were able to be more specific, participants usually mentioned activities related to the top-of-mind groups above, such as finding homes for animals or protecting endangered species. The unaided perceptions that most people have of AP goals and activities only rarely included legislation, litigation, lobbying, etc., but protests and demonstrations are mentioned occasionally.

- ❖ "I'm sure that you can read into that just anything you want to read into it. But for us it means protection for the endangered species and also protection for senseless killing of animals." [Qualified supporter; Female; Over 65; Some college, no degree; Retired from the USPS]
- ❖ "I think it's (the goal of AP advocates) protection and care for those (animals) that are vulnerable or that depend on humans for their life." [Neutral; Female; 45-54; Bachelor's degree, Marketer]
- ❖ "Like the humane society, their goal is to connect good homes with loving pets." [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Student / barista]
- ❖ [What are the humane society's goals?] "Oh, man, sometimes I really don't know. It's sort of all over the place. I want to believe that they're trying to help the animals, like finding the animals homes and

doing what they can for them, but sometimes they do stupid stuff.” [Strong supporter; Female; 18-24; High school graduate; Cashier]

- ❖ “The other thing that PETA wants, I do know because I’ve researched it, is they want all dogs and all cats and all birds, fish, whatever you’ve got, to be let loose.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 55-64; Writer]

HOW DO THESE UNAIDED ASSOCIATIONS RELATE TO THE PHASE ONE SURVEY FINDINGS?

The phase one survey indicated overall public favorability toward AP-related efforts and goals as people perceived them, with some qualifications. Given the somewhat absent or limited top-of-mind associations just described, however, it seems probable that the public’s favorability and support for those concepts is similarly limited or skewed. In the survey, many people likely answered questions based on this narrow view of AP, which may or may not comport with their perceptions of NCAP members. The phase one finding that AP organizations and activities are perceived as “extreme” was corroborated in phase two. However, during the discussions it was clear that **most people recognize that this extreme element represents only a minority of the AP movement**. These issues and other implications for the phase one survey results are discussed in further detail in the following sections.

- ❖ “I think it’s (the extreme AP element) a small group that gets a lot of attention. Because anybody who does something radical is going to get the attention and those are the ones you hear about.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 55-64; Writer]
- ❖ “I’m going to guess that it’s (the extreme AP element) a small percentage, but it’s a small percentage that puts themselves so forward that it’s what most people think of is that small percentage.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]

5. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF ANIMAL PROTECTION

// It would be (difficult for people to figure out where they stand on AP) if they thought about it enough, but they don't think about it enough. //
[Qualified Supporter; Male; 55-64; Retired]

The largely unformed perceptions of AP described in the previous section are partly attributable to the low awareness and knowledge of AP that exist across all support segments. In phase one, a strong majority of survey respondents reported that they discuss AP “every few months” or less frequently, and **about half of the public (48%) said it is “not at all” knowledgeable of AP efforts**. This lack of engagement was also evident in phase two, with the results suggesting that previous survey findings may even have overstated the public’s knowledge of AP. Beyond this basic lack of awareness and knowledge of AP-related issues and activities, what information the public does have is limited in important ways by their unaided associations.

HOW OFTEN DO PEOPLE THINK ABOUT, HEAR ABOUT, OR DISCUSS AP ISSUES? WHAT ARE THEIR SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT AP?

Most people only hear about AP-related issues and activities infrequently, further suggesting that these issues are not on the public radar. In phase one, nearly half (44%) of survey respondents said they had heard about or discussed AP only once or twice in the past year (or less), while only 15% had done so “frequently.” In phase two, some people (mostly neutrals and detractors) even commented that they would not have given AP any thought if not for participating in the research.

The public occasionally hears about AP-related news in the mainstream media, but personal discussions and deep consideration of the issue seem very rare for most people. The primary sources of information about AP cited by most participants are simply the mainstream press including mostly local television and radio news, as well as sometimes print media and the internet. **The public only rarely mentions receiving information directly from AP advocates**, suggesting there has been limited penetration by those organizations and individuals into the mainstream consciousness.

- ❖ “I don’t think there’s an ongoing or consistent effort that affects us or brings our attention to it (AP) on an even weekly basis. You read about and then it gets push off when some event happens” [Strong Supporter; Male; 35-44; Unemployed]
- ❖ “I don’t remember seeing any (AP) news in the last 4-5 months... nothing.” [Qualified supporter; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; IT Project Manager]
- ❖ “My impression is that national coverage (of AP) was always sporadic anyway, but that it’s lessened over the last 5-10 years, I guess more important things are going on, and bigger issues.” [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]
- ❖ “Unless it affects you directly, it (AP) doesn’t even register... generally speaking, I don’t think most people are aware.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 45-54; Import business]

Equally and perhaps more importantly for animal advocates, **personal interactions or discussions about AP-related issues appear to be extremely rare among the public, outside of advocate circles**. This may be a significant limitation to increasing public support for AP given the growing importance of word-of-mouth and personal communications. This is particularly true for issues like AP that may have significant social implications or require support from one’s friends and family. Given the infrequency with which most

people hear about AP or discuss it in their daily lives, it is perhaps little surprise that they are mostly unaware and uninformed about AP issues and activities.

WHAT AP ISSUES DO PEOPLE HEAR ABOUT MOST OFTEN?

The AP issues that people hear about and discuss most frequently correspond closely to (and may help to create) the limited overall perspective the public has regarding the AP movement. As stated previously, **the public has very little sense of the national AP scene and seems much more attuned to local AP issues and activities.** The phase two participants frequently mentioned hearing about local animal-related issues, usually involving “bad situations” like abuse of companion animals or wildlife rescue. Specific examples included stories about people neglecting or hoarding companion animals, as well as protection of habitat for local wild animals. Sometimes this involved an acquaintance or even a family member as the abuser.

- ❖ “Usually animals only make the news when there’s no other news to be made.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 35-44; Security]
- ❖ “Mostly when things go bad or animals have been harmed... you usually don’t get random positive things about what’s going on with animal protection.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “When it’s on the news, it’s usually something that’s bad or an extreme situation that makes the news... and then it just fades away until the next discovery...” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ “Occasionally they’ll find somebody who is mistreating a horse or they’ve got 30 cats in their house or something like that, you know, but other than that I don’t see it on the news as much as other things.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]

Some participants occasionally mentioned hearing about AP-related campaigns, demonstrations, or protests targeting different animal abusive industries. Most frequently mentioned were campaigns against animal testing and wearing real animal fur, reflecting the relative popularity that those issues have had on a national scale in recent decades. Some people in phase two also mentioned seeing or hearing about campaigns or protests promoting vegetarianism or targeting meat consumption, as well as against using animals in circuses. Upon discussion, most of these references appeared to be PETA campaigns or activities, but in some cases it was impossible to discern the source.

WHAT AP ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES DO PEOPLE HEAR ABOUT MOST OFTEN?

In phase one, only about half of the public was able to provide the name of a specific AP-related organization, and many people named environmental or conservation groups instead. Phase two found similar results and also clarified that awareness of AP-specific groups is concentrated among local companion animal shelters and wildlife rescue groups. People are more aware of these local groups as a result of news stories, as mentioned previously, and occasionally personal interactions. This immediate association with AP, along with a generally positive view of companion animal shelters and wildlife rescue groups, is probably the largest contributor to the overall support for AP identified in phase one.

- ❖ “If it happens in your neighborhood or your town, then it’s more interesting. What’s happening in Louisiana doesn’t make much difference to me except to say, ‘oh, I’m sorry.’” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 55-64; Retired]
- ❖ “Locally, it (AP) gets it (media) on occasion. About a year or so ago there was in the news about one of the counties, they were shooting the dogs instead of putting them to sleep with gas. That got about a week’s worth of news.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]

- ❖ “Another thing that does get my attention and more national press, primarily in news magazines and newspapers, are guerilla activities by PETA, by the animal liberation groups, by Greenpeace... people who are taking strong action to create an event to create awareness, so they will do unusual things to focus the media so they can get their story out.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 45-54; Import business]

Also from phase one, a majority of those who were able to name a specific AP group could only name PETA. **In phase two, participants frequently mentioned PETA, but the association of PETA with the broader AP movement was weaker than in phase one.** PETA often did not come up during initial discussions of AP activities and organizations, with participants only mentioning them later as the discussion turned to specific tactics. However, among national AP groups, PETA was the only organization mentioned with any regularity in phase two, with very rare exceptions for The HSUS and The ASPCA. Otherwise, unaided mentions of NCAP members and other national AP groups were very rare in both focus groups and interviews.

- ❖ “PETA gets my attention more than anything else. That’s probably not fair to say, I wouldn’t say gets my attention. It might not really even be PETA, but people in PETA that are voicing some of the most extreme views of PETA, but that’s what I attribute it to because I don’t have any other information about it.” [Neutral; Male; 25-34; Estimator]
- ❖ “The first thing that came to mind was groups like PETA... The first thought that came to mind was the more extreme groups that deal with cruelty toward animals. The second thought that came to me was like SPCAs.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “PETA and the humane society. Locally more like the humane society. PETA would be more like a national thing.” [Neutral; Male; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Loss Prevention]
- ❖ “Two organizations that come to mind are the humane association and PETA.” [Neutral; Male; 25-34; Estimator]

The Animal Planet show *Animal Cops* was mentioned frequently, including every focus group and the majority of one-on-one interviews.

Interestingly, **the Animal Planet show *Animal Cops* was mentioned frequently throughout phase two**, including every focus group and the majority of one-on-one interviews. People from all support segments seem to have a positive view of *Animal Cops* and in general strongly support rescuing animals from any cruel or neglectful situation. Participants’ frequent mentions of the television show are consistent with the top-of-mind AP associations that for so many people default to rescue efforts involving companion animals.

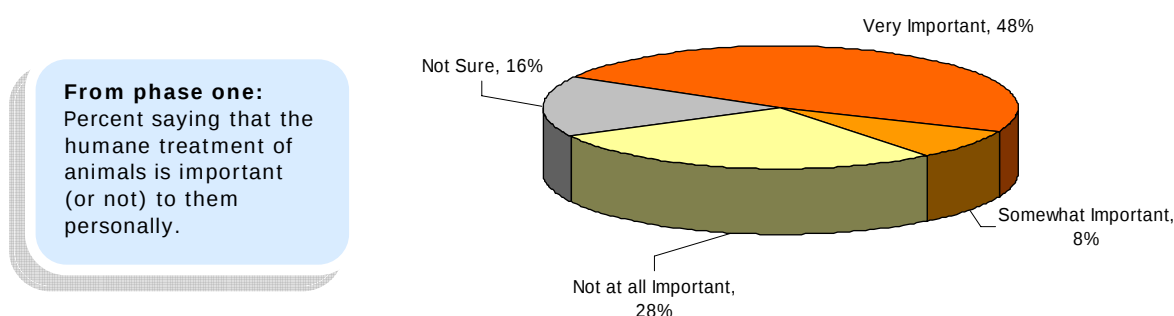
- ❖ [What do you think of when you hear “AP?”] “Animal Cops (laughs), on Animal Planet. I think that there are certain things that should be in place for animals, I don’t think people should be able to kill them or abuse them without consequences.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 25-34; Associate degree; Retail Sales]
- ❖ “I can’t specifically name (AP) stories from the national (media), I guess what I’m thinking of is, my kids watch the animal channel that we have here... the pet police where they go to different people’s homes, Animal Cops, that’s it.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]

6. PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

// I think that it's our nature to be compassionate to vulnerable people and animals and things like that. [Neutral; Female; 45-54; Bachelor's degree, Marketer] //

Although the US public is largely unaware of AP-related groups and relatively uninformed about their activities, almost everyone is nonetheless very supportive of treating animals humanely. In phase one, survey responses indicated that a strong majority of the public believes in the importance of treating animals humanely. The public's fundamental belief in humane treatment was also evident in phase two, **but most people qualify those beliefs in important ways when discussing different species of animals or situations**. Except for the strongest of supporters, phase two participants generally ranked AP lower in importance relative to their personal concerns and other social issues.

WHAT DRIVES THE PERVASIVE SUPPORT FOR HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS FOUND IN PHASE ONE?



In phase one we learned that nearly half of the public (43%) thinks humane treatment of animals is “very” important and another 49% say “somewhat” important. A majority of people also agreed that “animals should be protected from all harm and suffering” (64%) and that “humans are obligated to never harm animals” (56%). In the phase two focus groups and interviews, participants denounced being cruel to animals or causing any “unnecessary” animal suffering. For most people, treating animals humanely appears to be consistent with their notion of being a good and compassionate person.

- ❖ “On a spiritual level, they’re all equal beings on this planet, they all share this planet, breathe same air.”
[Qualified Supporter; Male; 45-54; Import business]

The phase one results indicated that the strongest supporters of humane treatment tend to be women who currently live with companion animals. This was corroborated in the phase two research, where supporters often mentioned growing up with companion animals and/or interacting with other animals in nature or on family farms. **When supporters were asked to describe their reasons for supporting AP, they almost always mentioned childhood companion animals and other experiences with animals when young.** Sometimes this also included experiencing firsthand or being shown examples of extreme or graphic animal abuse.

- ❖ [When I was young] “I think I learned stewardship, and that there are animals that you can use because we need them, for labor, for food, or clothing or whatever. But just to go out and kill or hurt things for sport is wrong. So there’s a balance that I was taught to look at and reach before I did anything like that (hunting).” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ [Why do you give AP a ‘10’ on importance?] “Just always being around animals, I’ve always had animals, from the time we were little bitty to the time we were grown up. Every animal you can name we’ve probably had at our house at one time or another. Just being around animals so much, I can’t stand to see any animal hurt.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 35-44; Unemployed]

For supporters, these experiences during childhood usually persisted into adulthood and also often seemed to frame their concerns about AP, both in general and regarding specific issues. People are more or less supportive of protecting different species of animals or those in different situations in part because of these experiences, as discussed further in the next section. Other factors such as geographical location and generally “progressive” perspectives also seem to have a major impact. For a more complete discussion of drivers of support for AP, please refer to Section 9.

- ❖ “All the people here I believe are probably products of the 1970s, a part of the environmental movement, and animal rights and animal protection (were) a part of that movement. The anti hunting of whales, the no dolphins in tuna, the protection of the timber wolves, so we all come in with pretty strong feelings about animals.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 45-54; Import business]

WHERE IS THE PUBLIC’S SUPPORT FOR HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS STRONGEST?

Members of the US public exhibit widely varying levels of concern or support for AP based on the species of animal involved, their intended use by humans, and the situational context. Overall, phase two participants seemed to be most concerned about protection of threatened or endangered animals as well as any animal in a particularly dire or cruel situation. Support for humane treatment was pervasive, but top-of-mind concerns were often limited to or at least more concrete for these types of situations.

- ❖ “It would be the wild animals (that concern me most), that is the least common, most valuable in terms of survival and that, like those on the endangered list, animals in that regard that are highly valued for their species, and are highly valued for keeping us in that ecological balance.” [Neutral; Female; 55-64; Graduate degree, Medical technician]
- ❖ “It’s a moral issue how we treat animals in research and livestock and our pets, (but) if we mishandle wildlife, the planet could die.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 35-44; Sales]
- ❖ “We value certain animals more than we do others and we treat them according to how we value them, it’s an economic thing going on there.” [Neutral; Female; 55-64; Graduate degree, Medical technician]

Many people believe that institutionally raised and farm animals are already protected by laws and the owners who have a financial interest in them.

Conversely, some participants showed less concern for animals based on the protections that they think are already in place. For instance, many people believe that institutionally raised and farm animals are already protected by laws and the owners who have a financial interest in them. Similarly, while there is significant sympathy for companion animals, many people believe that they already have legal protections and are cared for by their guardians. On the other hand, **endangered species, wildlife, and animals in very abusive situations were viewed as most in need of legal protection.**

- ❖ “I think wildlife need to be a little bit closer watched, because... nobody’s paying attention to them. Farm animals are raised by people and are looked after, and same with pets.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 35-44; Security]
- ❖ “If I supported one of the three (issues – companion animals, farm animals, wildlife), I think it would be the wildlife. I think that there are already laws in place to protect a lot of domesticated animals.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ “For domestic animals and farm animals, at least they are closer to the caretaker, so I would rely on the person who is taking care of them and that they are well taken care of. Where as wildlife, they aren’t, and they need more support.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Bachelor’s degree, Engineer]
- ❖ “The farm animals are the ones I have the hardest time with (supporting campaigns or protests for). They don’t seem to be getting extinct, and they’re not exactly there for companionship.” [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]

HOW DOES THE PUBLIC DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE USES OF ANIMALS?

The phase two participants unanimously agreed that **no animal should be mistreated or harmed by humans, and that no animal should suffer “unnecessarily.”** However, the delineation between “necessary” and “unnecessary” uses of animals is an important one heard throughout the phase two research and appears to differ only slightly by AP support profile. For some phase two participants, there appeared to be an unconscious or semi-conscious discrimination against institutionally raised and slaughtered animals. Most people, including AP supporters, tolerate the notion that some animals are “born for a certain purpose” and will inevitably suffer, including farm animals, laboratory animals, etc.

Most people tolerate the notion that some animals are “born for a certain purpose” and will inevitably suffer to some extent.

- ❖ “I think if they’re raised and if that’s their purpose, then there’s a time that they live and a time that they die. But to kill something just to kill it or for one thing, that’s not right.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 45-54; Graduate degree; Nurse educator]
- ❖ [Discussing animal testing] “I don’t like to see animals go through anything, but I think there are times when it’s necessary, but it could be done in a more humane way.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Data transcriber]

This does not mean that the public supports abusing such institutionalized animals or letting them suffer unnecessarily. However, **many people believe or have convinced themselves that institutionally raised animals are killed humanely.** This is especially true among detractors and neutrals who often defend those industries as caring for their animals. Phase two participants also showed generally greater concern for more familiar animals such as traditional US companion animals (dogs and cats), as well as animals more like humans (apes and monkeys).

- ❖ “We have to use animals for food, we are carnivores, we can’t get around that, but if we’re going to do that, up until the time that they die, they should be treated well and they should be killed in a humane manner.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 55-64; Writer]
- ❖ “I definitely have more empathy for pets because those are your responsibility to take care of them, whereas if you eat meat and you eat fish and this other stuff, you can’t hardly complain about how they kill them.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 35-44; Web developer]
- ❖ “Somehow a rat is different than a monkey, and I don’t know if that makes any sense, but there’s a big delineation. I don’t see a rat as a personality. That’s how I can get past it (testing on rats).” [Qualified supporter; Female; 45-54; Graduate degree; Nurse educator]

Supporters of AP are generally less tolerant of animal abuse or suffering of any kind, including institutionally abused animals for whom they often feel guilty. For AP supporters, however, attempts to protect those animals or end their suffering **can sometimes translate to a “lost cause.”** For instance, some strong supporters of AP say they oppose all animal suffering, but then admit that they think slaughtering farm animals is necessary and efforts to end the practice are futile. This notion is no doubt reinforced by their own complicity in consuming animals, a contradiction many strong supporters point out themselves.

HOW DOES PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR AP COMPARE TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES?

With only rare exceptions, phase two participants from all AP support segments said that human rights and protection should be prioritized ahead of animal protection. When asked to name their top-of-mind concerns outside of their own lives, people most frequently mentioned healthcare, education, and other human-related issues. For some people spanning all AP support segments, the need for human services and protection was mentioned as justification for not giving more consideration to non-human animals.

- ❖ “To me animals are important and it’s good someone speaks in their favor, but I’m much more of a humanist, I think my energy is better spent... there are so many problems in the world just with the human species.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “We don’t have human rights yet, we’re working on it, but we don’t have a full house of human rights... I think once we have our rights, and we can see the power of that, we’ll start to consider the consciousness of these other beings.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 45-54; Import business]
- ❖ “What I do (is) I balance against the human impact. I love animals, I wouldn’t want to hurt an animal, but at the same time, my life needs this (not specific) out of it. I want to know that if I take a medicine that it’s been tested on an animal to see what the reaction is before I take it. But not at the sake of my eye shadow.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ “When there’s an issue between human life and animal life, I think humans take the cake there.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ “Animals compared to human beings, they’re not on the same page in my estimation. They’re still important, but human life is a lot more important.” [Neutral; Male; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Loss Prevention]

In phase one, respondents excluding strong detractors had a favorable opinion of AP relative to most other social issues, the exception being environmentalism. In phase two, however, AP was generally perceived to be somewhat less important than other issues, although most people still consider AP important. In the case of environmentalism, the public’s association of AP with wildlife and other related issues leads them to think of it as **a subsidiary cause to environmentalism**. Some supporters list AP among their biggest concerns, but upon further questioning they often admit giving more attention to other issues.

- ❖ “I don’t think it (AP) is treated with the same seriousness that environmental issues are, generally. Environmentalism to me is a much bigger issue than this issue (AP) is... Environmentalism is everything and this is about the treatment of animals, and it’s not that it’s not important, but it doesn’t affect everything in the way environmentalism does.” [Neutral; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree, Writer]
- ❖ “I put the big environmental issues over animals that aren’t in danger of extinction.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 35-44; Sales]
- ❖ “I think animal protection gets less visibility, less awareness than other issues such as the environment, gay and lesbian rights, minority rights, and rightfully so because it does not have the economic impact. When you get an economic impact in there, then people are going to care more.” [Neutral; Female; 55-64; Graduate degree, Medical technician]

For most people, however, it just seems that AP cannot compete with their personal issues relating to health, money, work, family, friends, etc. Even the public's interest in human-oriented issues is weak relative to these daily concerns of life that for most people fall much lower on the hierarchy of human needs. **The public's disengagement from AP is not unique, but instead reflects a broader lack of time or interest to become more than superficially concerned about anything beyond one's own life.**

- ❖ [Rating importance of AP on scale of 1-10] "I would go more a 7/8, I just feel bad that animals have no voice, but it's not the highest priority of my life." [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Student / barista]
- ❖ "Somebody has to be out there speaking for them, putting them up front so nobody forgets, because people forget easily. They become entrenched in their own lives, their families, their economic situation, and animals go out the window." [Qualified Supporter; Female; 55-64; Writer]

7. AP ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL ADVOCATES

// I don't approve of everything that any organization does. //
 [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor's degree; Sales]

In phase one, we learned that the US public has somewhat mixed opinions about AP advocates. Despite having favorable opinions of AP overall, many people qualify their support for groups and individual advocates based on past experiences or specific types of advocacy. **For instance, in phase one about one-fourth (25%) of the population said they have “a great deal of respect” for AP activists, but a majority said only “some respect” (49%) or that they have only “very little or no respect” (20%).** This respect and overall support for AP advocacy depends upon a person's AP support segment and the types of activities or beliefs discussed. See the next section for a more detailed discussion of specific AP ideologies and tactics.

HOW DOES THE US PUBLIC PERCEIVE AP ORGANIZATIONS AND THE OVERALL “MOVEMENT”?

In phase one, nearly three-fourths of US adults (72%) said they have a “very” or “mostly” favorable opinion of the animal protection “cause.” As discussed previously in the top-of-mind associations, however, most people seem to perceive only a limited set of groups and activities falling under the AP umbrella. The overall AP cause or “movement” seemed to hold no real meaning for most people, many of whom struggled to provide an unaided description. The public's support for AP is therefore limited or qualified by their perception of what makes up the AP movement or cause.

- ❖ “I don't necessarily approve of some of the things PETA does, where I'm pretty much in favor of everything the humane society does, but I do think their intentions are the same.” [Strong Supporter; Male; 35-44; Unemployed]

Generally, AP is **perceived to have only a very small impact on US public policy**, and most participants say the impact has been less for AP than other social issues. In phase one, respondents ranked AP the lowest among six different social issues regarding impact, with only about 10% of the public saying AP has impacted public policy a “great deal.” In phase two, many participants struggled to come up with any impact that they think the broader AP movement has had on public policy.

- ❖ “If you look over time, I think we have significant impact... people don't wear fur anymore, we have leash laws that never existed when I was growing up, there's definitely been impact. But if you think about... as to what they've accomplished, I'd probably drop down to moderate.” [Strong Supporter; Male; 35-44; Unemployed]
- ❖ “My sense is that it's (AP advocacy) working less and less. It's really... I don't know if backfiring is the right word, but it gets the attention for a little while, then it just turns people off.” [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]
- ❖ “I would say definitely they've (AP advocates) created awareness about animals and how they're treated. I think they've done a great job with that, (but) I think there's always more that can be done.” [Strong supporter; Female; 25-34; Bachelor's degree; Accountant]

HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT INDIVIDUAL AP ADVOCATES?

The public's view of individual AP advocates (not groups) appears similar to their views about the overall movement. **Most people view AP advocates as well-intentioned, compassionate, and committed individuals, but for the most part they cannot or will not identify with them.** For many people, AP advocates or “activists” are often associated with taking a good idea too far by letting their cause and/or personal beliefs control every aspect of their lives.

- ❖ [What do you think of AP advocates?] “I think of someone who is really involved in the organizations, the day-to-day and the events that they hold... almost a way of life.” [Strong supporter; Female; 25-34; Bachelor’s degree; Accountant]
- ❖ “Yeah, I have a lot of respect for it (AP advocacy)... I respect them standing up for a cause they believe in, further than the extent that I’m willing to go.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]

Respect for advocates is rooted in the feeling that those who stand up for their beliefs are worthy of respect combined with the public's general support for animal protection. This respect was evident in phase two, but did not translate to supporting a broader AP ideology or even necessarily believing advocates' viewpoints as credible. Participants often described having respect for AP advocates' commitment and concern for animals, then later qualified that respect by limiting it to certain groups or tactics.

- ❖ “I respect them (AP advocates) until it gets too extreme.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 35-44; Accountant]
- ❖ “Yeah, I respect them (AP advocates) because they’re standing up for a cause they believe in and a cause that I agree with... I have to draw a line with the crazy people who are out doing stuff. But (I support) just their general purpose and that they’re trying to help animals.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Student / barista]
- ❖ “My uncle is a vegan, so family get-togethers have always been a little tense. For a while he wouldn’t even be in the same room if anyone is eating meat... so it caused a lot of familial turmoil. At that time I was still eating meat and he would preach to us young’ns or whatever...” [Later] “Now he’s mellowed out, so he doesn’t push it so much. It was just a very large thing in our family, he was very verbal about it and just trying to convert everybody. And I just have that view of people, because you can be so far into something that it does more harm than good.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]

Some AP activists are described as pushy with their beliefs or placing guilt trips on others, both in one-on-one settings and at protests and demonstrations.

Some people in phase two, particularly detractors and neutrals but also some supporters, describe AP advocates as imposing, angry, self-righteous, and/or indignant. Similarly, some AP activists are described as pushy with their beliefs or placing guilt trips on others, both in one-on-one settings and at protests and demonstrations. This “pushiness” was viewed by most people as counterproductive.

- ❖ “I have a hard time respecting them (AP advocates) just from the way that they act... It’s always a white or black issue, there’s no gray for them. You either are for them or you’re totally against them. Because of that attitude, it’s difficult to respect somebody, because they don’t show respect to those around them.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]
- ❖ “There’s PETA people that go down there (Santa Monica), they put up a booth and show pictures of animals being slaughtered and all sorts of things like that. And the thing that I really dislike about PETA just in general is that the people who are in it tend to be very angry... Anytime I disagreed with things that they were saying, they would get very angry with me. When you do see PETA protests and things, there’s a lot of anger.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]

- ❖ [Describing what she sees on the news] “They show the demonstrations, them yelling and screaming, and we just don’t believe that the yelling and screaming is going to do you any good. Write letters or find somebody to talk to. The louder you get the more people will shut their ears to it.” [Strong supporter; Female; 45-54; Some college, no degree; Homemaker]

HOW SENSITIVE IS PUBLIC SUPPORT TO VARIATIONS IN AP-RELATED TERMINOLOGY?

In phase one, survey responses did not change significantly when using different terms to describe the AP movement, including “animal protection,” “animal rights,” or “animal welfare.” There was a slightly negative association with “animal rights,” but the differences were small and only barely meaningful. The similarity of the three terms was mostly corroborated by phase two participants who in general did not have strong associations with any of the terms. Although many people considered all three terms relatively vague, some also felt that they were interchangeable or at least related.

- ❖ “I don’t know what the difference is between ‘animal rights’ and ‘animal welfare.’” [Qualified supporter; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; IT Project Manager]
- ❖ “They still link together. If an animal has rights, they need to have protection. If they don’t have the rights, then they’re not going to have the protection they need.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 35-44; Security]

Each of the three terms is an imperfect description and may have a negative connotation for some people, in particular “animal rights.” For instance, “rights” is a loaded term for some because it suggests the anthropomorphic giving of human legal rights to animals. The term “rights” is also generally associated with the more “extreme” elements of the AP movement, including PETA. The term “animal welfare” is perceived as less loaded than “rights,” but it still holds a negative connotation for some. This seemed most true for the few strong detractors (and self-described conservatives) who often negatively view social welfare for humans.

- ❖ “It feels a little like a competition, like our rights versus their rights, whose rights are going to be stronger? That’s part of what makes it threatening.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ “Again, that (‘animal rights’) brings a whole bundle of things you might already understand as ‘animal rights’ to it, but you’re going to already have people who have a pro or con feeling about it.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ “People have rights, animals have protection.” “Animals don’t have rights... that’s an extremist view that animals are over humans, and they’re not.” [Neutral; Male; 55-64; Graduate degree, Training center manager]
- ❖ “I would use the words ‘animal movement’ or ‘animal protection’ more than I would animal rights, because that could turn people off.” [Neutral; Female; 55-64; Graduate degree, Medical technician]
- ❖ “Animal rights seems like you’re talking about something that is a part of the animal itself, something the animal deserves. Animal protection seems like an active movement towards protecting those rights, so those two seem distinct. Then the word welfare carries a lot of baggage with it. I would associate it more with government action towards, in this case, animals.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]

Overall, “animal protection” seems to have the least negative association of the three terms, but it is also vague or unclear to some people. For many, “animal protection” leads them to think first of the general notion of protecting animals from abuse or neglect, which they roundly support. While rights and welfare are somewhat more abstract notions, upon further discussion **“protection” tends to make people think of concrete examples of keeping individual animals from harm.** There was even greater support for

“animal protection” when discussing the more active and explicit uses of the term, i.e., to protect *animals from harm or suffering*. Although the term “protection” is vague for some people, it seems preferable for AP advocates to use given these associations and the other, more loaded terms.

- ❖ “The term ‘protection,’ it doesn’t grab a person’s attention the way ‘rights’ does, (but it) might get people like myself, I don’t want to take a whole political stance on it, but I can say on Saturday I’ll show up to help with this situation...” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ “I would say (I would have more support for) animal protection, it’s more urgent.” [Neutral; Male; 45-54; Graduate degree; Civil Servant]
- ❖ “I feel like they’re distinct in a sense, but ‘animal protection’ is more of the act of what you’re doing. It seems like ‘animal rights’ is the phrase that everybody knows that’s like the political part of it, like the active, the groups that are into it. Just the term is more common to me.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ “I’m not fond of the term ‘animal rights,’ but ‘protection,’ I have a much warmer feeling about that.” [Neutral; Female; 55-64; Graduate degree, Medical technician]

In part because people do not have top-of-mind associations for these terms, their meaning depends largely on who is using them and in what context. For instance, references to PETA or the “humane society” will be framed by people’s existing perceptions of those groups more than whatever term is used to describe them. In other words, **use of these terms strategically may be able to mitigate negative connotations with AP, but they are probably not effective tools to proactively change people’s perceptions of advocates or the movement.**

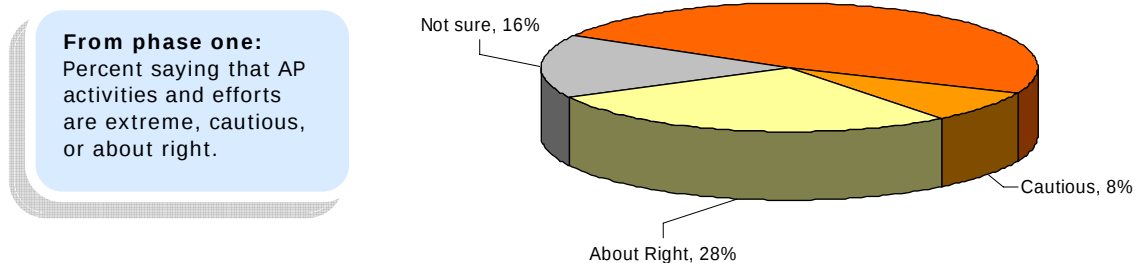
As stated previously, describing AP as a “movement” or “cause” had no real meaning for most phase two participants, and for some it has a negative connotation associated with the more extreme elements. People react similarly to the term “activist,” which they associate with extreme beliefs or lifestyles; **very few people would describe themselves as an activist for any cause.** The term “advocate” appears more acceptable to most people, but still has a slight negative connotation for some.

- ❖ “I might have a personal stance on it that might sync up with a lot of animal rights activists, but I don’t like the idea of being an activist.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ “I think of an animal activist as more intense than someone promoting animal rights. If someone said I’m an ‘animal activist,’ I’d be like ‘whoa,’ it seems more pushy.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “I don’t think of the humane society as a ‘movement.’ I think of it as an institution that is fulfilling a need.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ “Activist has more of a negative connotation to me. Advocate is simply promoting a cause, in a more naturally, generally accepted process.” [Qualified supporter; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; IT Project Manager]

8. AP IDEOLOGIES, TACTICS, AND ASSOCIATIONS WITH EXTREMENESS

// For many years I was a supporter of some of these groups that were talking about cruelty to animals, but when they take it to an extreme and do things that are that drastic, they get less support from me. //
[Neutral; Male; 45-54; Graduate degree; Civil Servant]

One of the key findings from phase one was the public's belief that AP efforts and activities are "extreme." Survey results indicated that the public is six times more likely to think that the activities and efforts of the AP movement are "extreme" compared to "cautious" (48% vs. 8%). These feelings were evident in phase two as well, with many participants eventually describing beliefs, activities, or tactics that they feel are extreme or "go too far." However, in phase two it was also clear that labeling AP activities as extreme or not is too simplistic compared to how most people view those activities. **In reality, people have a much more complex view of AP-related efforts and what constitutes an "extreme" belief or action.** In particular, views about the AP movement's extremeness appear to be both ideologically and tactically driven.



WHAT AP GOALS, BELIEFS, OR IDEOLOGIES DOES THE PUBLIC PERCEIVE AS EXTREME AND WHY?

In phase one, more than half of the US public (53%) said they support the goals of the animal protection movement despite a lack of clarity of what those goals include. Upon further investigation in phase two, participants often associated goals with the top-of-mind groups including companion animal shelters and wildlife rescue groups, which they support. **Most people do not initially grasp the full spectrum of AP-related activities,** however, and as discussions turned to broader AP ideologies and tactics support seemed to erode even for many of AP's strong supporters.

- ❖ [Describing what she sees on the news] "They show the demonstrations, them yelling and screaming, and we just don't believe that the yelling and screaming is going to do you any good... The louder you get the more people will shut their ears to it." [Strong supporter; Female; 45-54; Some college, no degree; Homemaker]
- ❖ "I don't like any group that goes to the extreme, whether it's liberal or conservative." [Qualified Supporter; Male; 35-44; Web developer]

- ❖ “I think it’s the tactic that I’m more concerned about. I would support an issue much easier than support a tactic. If the tactic was extreme and more radical, I would not be in favor of it. I think there are other ways of getting to people.” [Neutral; Male; 45-54; Graduate degree; Civil Servant]
- ❖ “You don’t have to go out and protest to the extreme to get attention. We have investigative reporters here and when they do their reports, they do them in a rational type manner to explain what’s going on. And that itself raises public awareness.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]

In phase two, there was an important and consistent distinction between AP ideologies that are described as extreme versus those described as acceptable. For example, the AP movement’s perceived desire to “protect all animals” is abstract but well-supported by the public. Upon further discussion, however, **many people feel that AP advocates are trying to impose a viewpoint that everyone should believe or act a certain way.** People believe that some AP advocates seek a world in which everyone is vegetarian or nobody has companion animals, and they consistently view those beliefs as extreme, regardless of support segment.

- ❖ [What is going too far?] “If you really want people to change, you have to approach them where they’re at, so you can’t come down on them and say ‘you’re doing the wrong thing.’ Approaching people where they’re at and being respectful... just kind of educating.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “Some people tend to really take things to the extreme. Okay, be passionate about something, do your best, but when you start forcing it on other people, I think the people you’re trying to force it on care less about it.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Data transcriber]
- ❖ “People don’t like to be lectured to or told they’re stupid or wrong, which is what I feel PETA does. Stay away from anything like that.” [Neutral; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree, Writer]

These “extreme” ideologies (as perceived by participants) also include putting animals before humans and seeking to ban or abolish almost any practice or behavior. Feelings that these are extreme goals or ideologies were fairly consistent across AP support segments, with even strong supporters resisting any abolitionist perspective. Participants’ views of what constitute extreme tactics, however, were much more diverse and influenced by overall support level (see next sub-section).

- ❖ “I think that maybe some of the really radical animal liberation groups, not PETA... I think they would be willing to put human life in front of an animal. If they were stopped in their mission to free animals, they would hurt somebody, and I think that’s going too far.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 45-54; Import business]
- ❖ [Why negative to AP?] “I think there’s an ideology of placing animals at the same place as humans, and I just thoroughly disagree with that. And I think that most people start there when they’re talking about animal rights.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]
- ❖ “I get aggravated with them sometimes because they take it to such an extreme, where they value a dog over a human. And I’m sorry, I love my dog, but I don’t value it more than my kids or anybody else.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]

US adults are fiercely resistant to any restriction on their personal freedom, including how to think, what to buy, etc.

This issue relates closely to what is perhaps the AP movement’s biggest challenge to convincing people to change their behaviors to protect animals. US adults in particular are fiercely resistant to any restriction on their personal freedom, including presumed “freedom of choice” regarding how to think, what to buy, etc.

Even among AP supporters who personally limit their choices or behaviors for animals, they usually assert other people's rights to make their own decisions without being dictated to by AP advocates.

- ❖ "While I feel like they have the right to assemble, they don't have the right to have me as the audience involuntarily, and I couldn't go to class without on some level being exposed to this every single time I was traveling." [Neutral; Male; 25-34; Estimator]
- ❖ "I think they (farm animals) should be raised in a humane way, but I don't think people should be forced to stop eating meat either." [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]

WHAT SPECIFIC AP TACTICS DOES THE PUBLIC VIEW AS EXTREME AND WHY?

Regarding specific tactics or activities, public opinion is more diverse and most people seem to base their opinions on rare public encounters and/or hearsay. Most people make distinctions between tactics viewed as extreme compared to others that are just considered ineffective, juvenile, counterproductive, or sensationalistic. In general, strong supporters are more tolerant of tactics others might view as extreme, with little hesitation to support petitions, demonstrations, and similar approaches. However, even many AP supporters tend to believe frequently heard stereotypes about AP advocates and think they sometimes go too far.

- ❖ "I think it's one of the problems that they face is if they're not being extreme then they don't get the air time. Which for me turns me off because they're being extreme and they're getting the air time because they're being extreme. It's a catch-22 situation. I don't how they would get the air time if they're not doing something that's putting them on the news, getting them free publicity." [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]
- ❖ [What does the 'animal protection movement' mean to you? What do you think of?] "Protesting, marching, throwing paint, yelling, screaming." [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor's degree; Sales]
- ❖ "The stereotypes that are attached to protests, it's the radical people, the crazies... the images that get portrayed in the media." [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Student / barista]

As noted previously, some participants feel that AP groups want to impose a viewpoint about animals rather than educate people and let them make their own decisions. For these people, passive tactics such as public education are acceptable and encouraged, but **"forcing" any viewpoint on someone is unacceptable**. Related to the ideological extremeness and freedom of choice noted earlier, there was also some resistance to potential laws that would ban or significantly limit humans' uses of animals.

- ❖ [Why are you negative toward PETA?] "I think part of it is that instead of presenting their ideas about why maybe you should think differently, they're trying to force people to think differently, and I think that's the most wrong thing there, to try to force people to think differently than they do." [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ "I don't think it's really correct for people to force their views on other people. To present information, that's the main thing, but when you criticize, that's when I take offense." [Qualified Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ [Commenting on Australia's law outlawing keeping fish in bowls] "But how far do you go with it? You don't want to keep a fish in a bowl, but can you keep a dog in your house, or like confining other animals." [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Student/barista]

The US public's top-of-mind "extreme" tactics seem to include actions like throwing red paint on people's fur coats (mentioned frequently), releasing animals from labs and farms, etc. During discussions, many phase two participants said that tactics used by PETA and similar groups are extreme or at least sensational, and

in most cases ineffective. Indeed, many people from all support segments feel some discomfort with legal protests and demonstrations, and essentially everyone felt that illegal or “disorderly” protests are extreme or juvenile.

- ❖ [Are any AP activities too extreme?] “When the activists get all crazy, and they’re spraying coats. Stuff like that I think is extreme. I don’t think it’s an answer, it’s not going to stop anything.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Data transcriber]
- ❖ “Whatever you’re going to protest, you need to do it in an orderly fashion, not having it turn into chaos or violence or things being thrown. There’s no need for that.” [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]

Phase two participants responded to a full spectrum of AP-related activities including the following general tactics and approaches, listed roughly from most to least acceptable. However, please note that within each of these tactical areas there are nuances based on species of animals or specific situations that significantly impact the acceptability of the tactics among the public.

Public education: When asked what approaches are most effective for AP advocacy, many people said simply exposing the public to the realities currently faced by animals. Educating the public in a non-aggressive manner and without imposing one’s viewpoint is the only form of AP advocacy that everyone seems to accept without hesitation. For most people, this support for public education includes receiving direct communication from AP groups, and most seem to have little problem with direct mail and related approaches.

- ❖ “Educating, I’m all for it. Teach me what you want to teach and whether I take it and use it in my life is up to me.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ “What would most catch my attention would be just information, books. I’ve read books before that have caused me to change my lifestyle, just because I learn something from them that rung to me. I say as long as there’s real information about why I should change and how to do it, I’m more likely to be impacted by that.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ “When I think of what needs to be done or what I’d like to see done, I think of education... I think if they (people) were better educated and it (AP) was on the forefront of peoples’ minds, they might be able to do more.” [Strong Supporter; Male; 35-44; Unemployed]

Use of graphic materials: The use of graphic imagery related to AP seems to have a mixed impact on people. Among many supporters, these images from past experiences and childhood appear to have been instrumental to their support for AP. However, among detractors, neutrals, and many qualified supporters, graphic imagery was often discounted as sensational or not representative of the problem at hand.

- ❖ [What caused you to be concerned about this issue?] (Our family used to visit the humane society in Southern California) “We’d go and we’d see which one (dog) we’d pick if we could pick one, and we got to pick one. But on the wall in the humane society was a frame with pictures in it, and they were all pictures of abused animals, or animals in bad situations. (That’s been my image of it since then).” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Student / barista]
- ❖ “The extreme things that I associate it with are flyers, pamphlets with graphic images on it of animal cruelty. Sometimes extreme statements of any housing, or ‘imprisonment’ I think is the term I heard used, of any animal is cruel. So like it’s cruel of me to own a dog or own a cat.” [Neutral; Male; 25-34; Estimator]
- ❖ “I don’t want them having those (graphic) pictures on there, but it’s not saying that they can’t. I guess part of it is because, some of the pictures they show I don’t want my kids to see.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]

Protests and demonstrations: Legal protests were often described as a legitimate tactic during discussions based on a widespread support for freedom of speech. **After further discussion, however, it became clear that many people have a negative visceral reaction to public protests.** Most people say a protest is only legitimate and not considered extreme if it is legal and “peaceful” or “orderly.” Protests are considered extreme or they “go too far” when the advocates seem angry or become hostile toward others. Perhaps more importantly, some participants seemed to feel that protests are ineffective or juvenile and that they may “do more harm than good.”

- ❖ “I think there’s a very peaceful, appropriate way to protest and getting your point across. Being in a mass group, making sure people know what you’re standing for, what you’re trying to spread. Not being crazy or causing any havoc or being violent. But I think protest is an appropriate way to get your point across.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “(I would support) almost anything is okay as long as it’s legal and peaceful. I think if you want to protest something going on, walking and carrying banners is just absolutely fine. But when you have people who don’t agree with you and they’re crossing whatever line you’re making, and treating them poorly, that’s crossing the line.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Doctorate degree; Lab Manager]
- ❖ “I find it offensive or almost intrusive when I see people doing that (protesting), even when I’m in favor of something or have strong opinions about it...” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ [What about people picketing and carrying banners?] “I feel kind of mixed about that. It gains the public’s attention, but sometimes gets a negative viewpoint also from doing that.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 18-24; Some college, no degree; Student]
- ❖ “Carrying on 3-ring circuses doesn’t help your cause. You need to have more organized, logical progression of a presentation.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 45-54; Graduate degree; Nurse educator]

Targeting individuals: Several phase two participants criticized AP tactics that target individual people, including consumers and some celebrities. AP advocates who protest consumers rather than the companies from which they are buying are sometimes described as “misdirected.” Verbal attacks against celebrities and other public figures are also considered extreme or juvenile by many people, including AP supporters. Examples include ridiculing celebrities who wear fur or attacking meat industry icons such as the recent PETA campaign to remove a bust of Colonel Sanders from a government building.

- ❖ [What do you consider extreme?] “The (AP) magazines are verbally bashing these people (celebrities wearing fur) for wearing this stuff... it’s a little juvenile, you know?” [Strong supporter; Female; 18-24; High school graduate; Cashier]

Legislation and litigation: In general there seems to be support for these tactics among members of the public because advocates are operating within the system to change things for animals. However, support for a piece of legislation or lawsuit depends in large part on the animal issue addressed. As mentioned earlier, there is public resistance to any laws that ban animal-related practices outright or significantly restrict personal behaviors, even by many AP supporters.

This relates closely to the resistance against abolitionist ideologies and the support for individual “freedom of choice” mentioned earlier. Laws that seek to reduce suffering and harm caused to animals, however, seem to garner support even for institutional environments (farms, labs, etc.). In a few cases, people are seemingly resistant to any new laws just on principle; this is particularly true among AP strong detractors and neutrals, and self-described conservatives.

There is public resistance to any laws that ban animal-related practices outright or significantly restrict personal behaviors.

- ❖ “I don’t necessarily think there should be legislation about how animals should be killed. I don’t necessarily support that, I just think people should use their own values and assess what they feel is humane and do it that way.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ [Regarding activists shutting down a cockfight vs. calling authorities] “I would say work within the system to set it right.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 55-64; Writer]
- ❖ [On PETA protests against KFC] “If they were saying we need to allow them appropriate housing and kill them in a humane way... I would have a positive feeling towards that. But if it was ‘we shouldn’t kill chickens at all,’ obviously I disagree with that wholeheartedly.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]
- ❖ “I think there are enough laws for domestic (animals)... for our pets.” [Neutral; Female; 45-54; Bachelor’s Degree, Marketer]

Illegal tactics: Most people seem to equate legitimacy with legality, and most illegal tactics are viewed as extreme or even counter-productive. For instance, the stereotype of activists throwing paint on fur-wearers was frequently mentioned and roundly criticized as physical assault without achieving any good for animals. Tactics such as laboratory break-ins and animal releases, in addition to being considered extreme, **were also often viewed as counterproductive and hurting the image of the overall AP movement.**

- ❖ “If people want to protest animal cruelty against the fur industry, carrying on a campaign asking people not to buy or picket a fur store, I would think people have the right to do that... but if somebody did break in, steal, or destroy furs, that would probably bother me a little more than just protests. That would be disturbing.” [Neutral; Male; 45-54; Graduate degree; Civil Servant]
- ❖ “I think breaking into someplace or releasing something is like an impulse that’s acting on your rage, but it’s not really getting at the root of the problem.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “It’s one thing to break in and free the animals, but to break in and destroy their research, stuff like that, that’s too far.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 35-44; Security]

HOW MUCH DO THESE PERCEPTIONS IMPACT PEOPLES’ VIEWS OF THE ENTIRE MOVEMENT?

It is clear from both phases of research that some of the AP groups, beliefs, and tactics that compose the US movement are viewed as extreme, sensational, or just ineffective. Overall, however, the extreme or unacceptable AP element is generally not top-of-mind for most people, and **therefore associations with extremeness were not as pronounced in phase two.** Top-of-mind organizations such as companion animal shelters and wildlife rescue groups are viewed as legitimate and decidedly not extreme except in very rare situations. Interestingly, after discussion most participants perceive all AP groups to be under the same general umbrella despite employing very different tactics, some acceptable and some not.

- ❖ [Regarding HSUS and PETA] “I’d put them under the same umbrella, but with different methods.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 55-64; Retired]
- ❖ [Describing HSUS and PETA] “They certainly fall under the same umbrella, they’re both trying to accomplish something better for animals, they’re just different tacks, and probably necessary... I think PETA by its very nature pushes people away because they’re fighting for what they believe in, and that’s going to upset some people. Where I think the humane society probably brings people back.” [Strong Supporter; Male; 35-44; Unemployed]
- ❖ “I’m wondering if (different AP groups) might have different factions within their groups. I think they have the level-headed people that have goals and are making headway. Then I think they have the grandstanders that come in without a clue as to why or where they’re there but they’re going to make a to-do about it.” [Qualified supporter; Female; Over 65; Some college, no degree; Retired from the USPS]

- ❖ “I think PETA gets assigned the bad stuff that happens when guys put spikes in the trees, although that’s an independent group of protesters protesting a particular action in an inappropriate way... PETA is a magnet for the bad stuff.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 45-54; Import business]

Despite the belief that all AP groups care about similar issues and operate under the same umbrella, participants still draw clear distinctions between groups and tactics. Except among strong detractors, most participants recognize that the unacceptable or extreme elements within the AP movement are the minority. Most say the extreme element is either “very small” or in the range of 10-20%, although some detractors say it’s the majority. The extreme groups mentioned by phase two participants were often limited to only PETA and those individuals who engage in illegal activities. As discussed previously, views about legitimate or extreme tactics are less clear-cut than opinions about specific groups, but the more extreme actions are often mentioned as the only ones that people hear about.

Most participants recognize that the unacceptable or extreme elements within the AP movement are the minority.

- ❖ “The 1% of (AP) the activists that make the news kind of ruin the image for all. Normal protests wouldn’t be covered on CNN.” [Qualified supporter; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; IT Project Manager]
- ❖ “I would say 75% (of the AP movement) acts normally, maybe 25% is a little bit extreme.” [Neutral; Male; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Loss Prevention]
- ❖ “I’m going to guess that it’s (the extreme AP element) a small percentage, but it’s a small percentage that puts themselves so forward that it’s what most people think of is that small percentage.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Mom]
- ❖ “Of the visible animal protection movement, I would say 80-90%” (are too extreme). [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]
- ❖ “I think probably 80-90% of the ideology behind the animal rights movement that I disagree with as well. If they were presenting that ideology in a way that I would say is... civilized, I guess, legal even, I would support it in the sense that I think that’s a positive thing.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]

In general, however, it is also clear that people’s views of AP and the legitimacy of various tactics are unique to every person and every situation. In cases where animal abuse is egregious and obvious to the public, more “extreme” tactics are sometimes considered warranted or at least acceptable, most notably by AP supporters. In other cases where advocates are perceived as pushing some broader agenda (i.e., “to make everyone go vegetarian”), even public education can be viewed as imposing or offensive. The most legitimate approaches are perceived as those that **address AP-related concerns shared by a majority of people and that use legal and orderly means to create a tangible benefit for animals.**

- ❖ “In my mind there is a clear distinction (between extreme groups and others like SPCAs), one is more radical and extreme, they don’t listen to reason because they already have a set agenda. They believe their goals are the only way to protect animals and they’d like to make a point.” [Neutral; Male; 45-54; Graduate degree; Civil Servant]

9. KEY INFLUENCES ON THE PUBLIC'S SUPPORT FOR ANIMAL PROTECTION

// I do find myself wanting to defend certain animals in certain situations, especially the defenseless, or if they're being mistreated. //
 [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]

The phase one survey found that about 30% of the public has relatively strong views toward AP in general, including 21% identified as “strong supporters” and 9% identified as “strong detractors.” The majority of US adults (70%), however, fall into segments having relatively qualified, mixed, or ambivalent views of AP. The research with these people in phase two suggests that there are common reasons that drive support for AP that span multiple segments. Similarly, there are common reasons that seem to prevent many people in these segments and even some strong supporters from fully endorsing a consistent AP ideology.

WHAT MOTIVATIONS FOR SUPPORTING AP ARE COMMON TO ALL SEGMENTS OF THE PUBLIC?

As stated previously, a fundamental support for the humane treatment of animals is widespread even among AP detractors. For most people, **treating animals humanely is simply part of being a good or compassionate person**. This belief extends to opinions of advocates as well, with most people agreeing that work on behalf of AP is honorable and necessary. For some people, these feelings are limited to certain issues or tactics, but they arise out of a basic and pervasive agreement with a need for treating animals humanely.

- ❖ [Describing AP advocates] “I’d say a very compassionate person. Obviously, very compassionate and caring.” [Qualified supporter; Female; Over 65; Some college, no degree; Retired from the USPS]
- ❖ [Describing AP advocates] “Someone who is deeply caring. There are some who go overboard to some extreme. But someone who cares deeply for the animals and will do what they have to, to keep them protected, within legal limits and reason.” [Strong supporter; Female; 45-54; Some college, no degree; Homemaker]

The public is **most motivated to support situations where there is a sense of urgency for the animals involved, in particular abusive situations and endangered species**, as already mentioned. This explains the widespread associations of the show *Animal Cops* with AP, as well as the unanimous support it receives, even from AP detractors. There is in general pervasive public support for helping any animal in a dire or abusive situation. However, **most people do not recognize the lives of some institutionalized animals as dire** (i.e., on farms or in laboratories).

- ❖ “I would push all the bells and whistles if I saw something that was horrific.... But it would have to be something pretty horrific for me to notice it. I think in the big picture most things are not horrific.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 45-54; Graduate degree; Nurse educator]
- ❖ “When I think of animal rights in general I think of abuse of animals and protection of endangered species.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 35-44; Web developer]
- ❖ [Rating importance of AP from 1-10] “I hate to admit this, but probably a 5.” [Later] “I’m much more concerned about pets... they’re a 10. Farm animals, I don’t think there’s that much abuse of farm animals for the most part, they’re probably a 3.” [Strong Supporter; Male; 35-44; Unemployed]

The public also appears more motivated to support local or regional AP issues and those that are of more relevance to them personally. Generally, **local issues seem more tangible to people and to garner greater support than national issues for this reason.** AP supporters and detractors alike describe predominantly local issues when asked what types of AP activities they support. These issues came up frequently in phase two, although it was impossible to determine with certainty whether people are more supportive of local issues generally, or just more aware of them.

- ❖ “If it happens in your neighborhood or your town, then it’s more interesting. What’s happening in Louisiana doesn’t make much difference to me except to say, ‘oh, I’m sorry.’” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 55-64; Retired]
- ❖ “Show commercials like how you see the commercials of the kids starving, over in Ethiopia. Show an emaciated dog, and not one over from San Francisco, show one here in Louisville, they’re everywhere... make them aware it’s in their backyard.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 35-44; Security]

WHAT BARRIERS TO SUPPORTING AP ARE COMMON TO ALL SEGMENTS OF THE PUBLIC?

As discussed previously, the foremost barrier to support for AP is simply attention given to the issue. Despite the public’s basic support for humane treatment of animals, AP is not on the public radar in any meaningful way. This is primarily due to peoples’ concerns about their daily lives and the lack of time most people have to devote to anything else. However, AP also appears to have difficulty standing out among the small handful of social issues that can sustain public attention at any one time.

- ❖ “There are a lot of issues that are important to me that I don’t act (on) or do anything about...” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Student / barista]
- ❖ “I just found that there are eight other things that are more important (than AP), so it’s relative. Yes it’s important, but there are eight other things that are more important.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 55-64; Retired]

Another pervasive barrier to support for an AP-oriented ideology is concern about denying anyone the freedom to choose for themselves how to think or behave. In phase two, detractors and supporters alike felt that some AP advocates want to “make everyone go vegetarian,” to ban having companion animals, etc. **Except for directly abusing animals or causing unnecessary suffering, even many strong AP supporters say it should be a personal choice whether or not to consume animals, “own pets,” wear real animal fur, etc.**

Even many strong AP supporters say it should be a personal choice whether or not to consume animals, “own pets,” etc.

- ❖ “I have no problem with anyone having their own views, a lot of them I don’t agree with and that’s fine. But to push anybody into trying to believe what they believe, that bothers me.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Data transcriber]
- ❖ “Here they are, taking themselves seriously, going almost crazy fanatical about it, and if you make fun of them about it, they lose their ground... [How are they fanatical?] fanatical enough to tell you to change your lifestyle, so you kind of make fun of that.” [Neutral; Male; 18-24; Soldier]
- ❖ “These people could go around to farms that are abusing animals and just explain to them the difference. But by robbing people of the option to choose, they’re kind of going against human rights.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]

As mentioned previously, people from all support segments feel that human issues should be prioritized above AP. **The perception that AP organizations and advocates do not care about humans or**

prioritize non-human animals above humans is a commonly stated reason for not supporting AP. This is particularly true among neutrals and detractors, but also with some qualified and even strong supporters. Similarly, most people seem to believe the notion that there is a **“natural order” or “food chain” that justifies some sense of human dominance over other animals.** Some people perceive AP advocates who seek to abolish or significantly limit humans’ use of animals as not respecting this “natural order.”

- ❖ “This lady who worked at this shelter that I went to, she for sure held these cats as being more important than other people, for sure she did. I would support that shelter, but her particular ideology in that shelter, I wouldn’t support.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]
- ❖ “Some organizations think we should all be vegetarians, but I think if that were to happen it wouldn’t be long until we were talking about the feelings of plants. So I think there’s an order of nature and we have a responsibility to respect it all the way through.” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Doctorate degree; Lab Manager]
- ❖ “I think everything on our planet is a cycle and (has) a purpose for it. We’re all living to die. If you’re raised for beef or whatever it is, as long as that animal is used in a timeframe and humanely put down, I don’t want to see the horrible conditions in slaughterhouses and those kinds of things.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 45-54; Graduate degree; Nurse educator]
- ❖ “I’m a Christian, I believe that... created by God we’ve been given dominion over animals and the world. And I do believe that there’s an important place in taking care of that, of what God has bestowed upon us as a gift. So I’m all for taking care of what we have.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]

10. KEY DIFFERENCES BY AUDIENCE AND AP SUPPORT SEGMENT

The previous section included motives and barriers to supporting AP that span multiple segments of the US public. In most cases, however, advocates are not speaking to the public as a whole, but rather targeted groups such as the AP support segments identified in phase one. The level of support one's audience already has for AP of course greatly influences how they view messages or actions advocating for animals. For existing AP supporters, advocates may do well to reinforce the reasons for their support and encourage them to take action or make small personal changes for animals. **For AP detractors and most neutrals, however, advocates may first need to confront their negative perceptions and stereotypes** to encourage support for AP beyond egregious abuse situations and wildlife or companion animal issues.

WHAT KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUPPORT SEGMENTS WERE IDENTIFIED IN PHASE ONE?

The phase one results indicated some important demographic and other differences between AP support segments that themselves can be used as the basis for targeting. The primary differences between segments are the variables used to define them, including 1) overall favorability toward AP efforts; 2) support for the AP movement's goals; and 3) respect for AP advocates. Strong supporters are positive on all three, detractors are negative on all three, and the remaining segments have mixed opinions. Other demographic and related distinctions between support segments are described briefly below (also refer to the chart in section 3).

- **Strong Supporters** : AP's strong supporters (21% of the public) are predominantly female and much more likely than other segments to live with companion animals. Strong supporters are also more likely than other profiles to be supporters of other "progressive" causes.
- **Qualified Supporters**: About 40% of adults fall into the qualified AP supporters segment and their demographic characteristics parallel the overall US public. Qualified supporters hold beliefs similar to strong supporters, but they are either less respectful of activists or less supportive of AP's goals as they perceive them.
- **Neutral and Conflicted**: About 30% of adults are classified as neutral and/or conflicted with respect to AP, meaning they have weak opinions of the movement or they hold seemingly conflicting attitudes. Like qualified supporters, neutral and conflicted people do not distinguish themselves demographically.
- **Strong Detractors**: AP's strong detractors (9% of the public) skew very heavily male and slightly whiter than the general survey population. The strongest detractors are the most likely segment to have obtained undergraduate or post-graduate degrees, suggesting they are more educated than the overall population.

In phase one there appeared to be an inverse relationship between support for AP and one's level of formal education. **The survey results indicated that AP's strong detractors were the most educated segment and had received significantly more education than the population as a whole.** In phase two, research with detractors was limited to only one focus group and a handful of interviews, and therefore it was difficult to identify the reasons why AP detractors are more educated. Some phase two participants suggested that this might be attributable to people with more education being driven by rationality more than emotion. Others suggested that formally educated people are more engaged and aware of current events, and therefore they see the more extreme aspect of AP that receives media attention. However, it is impossible to identify with certainty any causal relationship between formal education and support for AP.

- ❖ “More educated people are more aware, so they might have higher expectations compared to other people” [Neutral; Female; 35-44; Bachelor’s degree, Engineer]
- ❖ “I think we (people with more formal education) accept less what we read, what we hear, and what we see... we’ve been trained that way through our formal education.” [Neutral; Female; 45-54; Bachelor’s degree, Marketer]
- ❖ “Is there any chance that people with more education are maybe getting more news from more sources and mistaking protection for rights?” [Neutral; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree, Writer]

WHAT OTHER KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SEGMENTS SURFACED IN PHASE TWO?

In phase two there appeared to be some differences between AP supporters and detractors that showed up relatively weakly or not at all in the phase one survey data. Probably the most notable differences between segments were when discussions turned to specific AP ideologies and tactics. **All segments denounce most illegal actions and confrontational tactics while supporting prevention of animal abuse and rescue work.** However, when it comes to in-between tactics such as demonstrations and passing legislation, as well as some AP-related ideologies, there is significant diversity of support among the different segments.

Phase two participants from different support segments often described a distinction between emotional and rational arguments in favor of supporting AP. AP supporters frequently said that their emotional responses were fundamental to their personal evolution toward greater support for AP. Many detractors and neutrals, however, criticized emotional arguments as sensational. They often said they would be more responsive and likely to support rational AP arguments while ignoring or discounting emotional appeals.

- ❖ “I would say emotional (arguments are better than logical), because when logic comes in, money come into it and greed...” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 35-44; Clerk outpatient]
- ❖ “Animals are emotional by nature, so I think an emotional nature really works well. It’s good to have facts to explain everything, because critics will always say, where are the facts... but protecting animals is really an emotional cause.” [Qualified supporter; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; IT Project Manager]
- ❖ “I think the emotional (approach) works for about two minutes, then I get ticked off because they try to pull at your heartstrings without there being some legitimate reason for it.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]
- ❖ “For me, I’m probably more convinced by reason, by rational arguments and things like that. It seems like the commercials that I’ve seen that are more animal rights... that’s an emotional argument that is driven at my emotions which probably totally works on a lot of people, (but it) doesn’t work on me at all.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor’s degree; Sales]

WHAT UNIQUE FACTORS MOST CONTRIBUTED TO SUPPORTERS’ FEELINGS ABOUT AP?

In the phase two research, many strong and qualified supporters mentioned being around animals when they were young or consistently throughout their lives. **Interaction with companion animals, wildlife, and even farm animals seems to be a major driver of support for AP in general,** and all of these people mentioned such experiences fondly. For instance, some mentioned family vacations to Yosemite and Yellowstone parks or visits to animal shelters. Many detractors and neutrals also interacted with animals while young, but they often describe those experiences and relationships with less enthusiasm.

- ❖ “I was raised by a parent who... raised me with a sense of their (animals’) personality, their individualism, their rights... I raised my own kids that way.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 55-64; Writer]

- ❖ “We definitely had pets growing up. We’ve had dogs for as long as I can remember. I definitely remember enjoying trips to the zoo, seeing how the animals were being well preserved, and especially the ones that are at risk of being extinct. I’ve always had a feeling of caring about animals.” [Strong supporter; Female; 25-34; Bachelor's degree; Accountant]
- ❖ “My dad really didn’t want a dog in the house or anything like that.” [Neutral; Male; 35-44; Some college, no degree; Loss Prevention]
- ❖ “I grew up with pets, and partly on a farm. Raising cattle, goats, hogs... I mean, we butchered. We butchered chickens... We always had pets, but they were always outside dogs. We never had any inside pets.” [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]
- ❖ “I grew up in the woods in Colorado. I grew up hunting and I also was related to animals in that sense.” [Strong detractor; Male; 18-24; Bachelor's degree; Sales]

Some supporters described experiences where they had witnessed or were shown examples of extreme or graphic animal abuse, usually as children. For instance, one woman recalled an AP advocate showing her class pictures of companion animal abuse when she was 12 years old. Those images remained with her through adulthood and were formative to her ongoing support for treating animals humanely. Detractors and most neutrals rarely described such experiences or any emotional response to them.

WHAT UNIQUE BARRIERS PREVENT SUPPORTERS FROM BEING MORE SUPPORTIVE OF AP?

Among many of AP’s strong supporters, there appears to be a genuine desire to be more involved, but they hesitate for fear of being ideologically inconsistent. In phase two, strong supporters often guiltily admitted consuming meat and stated it as a reason why they would not consider themselves an AP “activist.” Indeed, even among supporters there was resistance to being called an activist, in part because they resist the lifestyle that they perceive as inseparable from AP activism.

- ❖ “I wouldn’t consider myself an animal activist. I’d have to be doing more.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “I might have a personal stance on it that might sync up with a lot of animal rights activists, but I don’t like the idea of being an activist.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ “Going back to your last question, I would be a 10 (regarding ranking the importance of AP) if I didn’t eat meat. Because I think it would be hypocritical for me to say that I care so much about animals because I do eat meat.” [Qualified Supporter; Male; 45-54; Import business]

In phase two, AP supporters often remarked that they do not know how to make a difference for animals. They resist becoming “activists” for the reasons above, but also claim they cannot find other ways to become engaged in the issue. These supporters say they would do more for AP if they knew of **quick and simple actions or changes that they could easily incorporate into their lives**. Many also say they would be most likely to get involved in shelter work or to find something they can do from home.

- ❖ “For me, they just have to make it feasible for me, in my life... I’m not going to drive five hours to pet a cow. That’s just where I’m at right now, I just need something that’s doable for me. So probably nothing that involves giving money, can’t do that. Driving, can’t do that... I don’t know, something that’s possible.” [Strong Supporter; Female; 18-24; Student]
- ❖ “To help someone like me, come up with a list or some presentation, these are ways you can help animals through what you purchase and what you don’t purchase. So it’s a list of feasible things to do that are easy.” [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Student / barista]
- ❖ “I like simple alternatives or even small steps... I would be open to more information as far as ways where I can shake hands with the devil a little less on a daily basis.” [Neutral; Male; 25-34; Estimator]

Some of AP's supporters say they most support the tactics, programs, and campaigns that result in positive and measurable outcomes for animals, and in some cases they only support those tactics. This was also sometimes mentioned as a reason to discount some tactics such as protests or illegal actions as being ineffective and therefore less supportable. At other times, supporters indicated that **local AP efforts feel more tangible to them because they are able to see the outcome**. For some of these people, there was a feeling that national and more visible AP efforts are often focused on getting public attention rather than protecting animals.

- ❖ "I have to see a productive outcome, and I don't know what that would be, but that's usually the motivator for me personally." [Qualified supporter; Female; 45-54; Graduate degree; Nurse educator]
- ❖ "I tend to support programs and things where I can actually see a result, not where if I give them a check, they're going to print brochures to get more checks." [Qualified Supporter; Female; 25-34; Customer service rep.]
- ❖ "If they can point to specific positive things that they've done, and what they do on community education, if they do outreach into schools is a wonderful thing, or in shopping malls." [Neutral; Female; 55-64; Graduate degree, Medical technician]

WHAT UNIQUE BARRIERS PREVENT DETRACTORS AND SOME NEUTRALS FROM SUPPORTING AP?

For AP's strong detractors and many neutrals, the **AP ideology is clearly linked to an overall liberalism** with which they are uncomfortable. Phase two corroborated the phase one survey results indicating people who are less supportive of AP are also less supportive of other causes generally believed to be "liberal" or "progressive." This association of AP with other issues like radical environmentalism and gay/lesbian rights may predispose the relatively conservative detractors and neutrals to disfavoring AP.

- ❖ "If we're going to be blunt here, I look at most of their platform is going to be extraordinarily liberal, and I'm extraordinarily not liberal. That doesn't mean there can't be dialogue and we can't find things to agree on, but the likelihood of me supporting more than a few of their particular causes is slim because I don't see things the way they do." [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]

Detractors and some neutral or conflicted people feel strongly that the AP movement wants to impose its will on people, and they cite this as a reason not to support the issue. Some AP supporters also feel this way and their support is limited as a result, but the belief is most concentrated among detractors. Detractors also often say that a majority of the AP movement is extreme tactically, ideologically, or both, while supporters recognize the extreme elements as only a small minority. For many people in these segments, these associations with AP appear to lead them to describe advocates as "angry" or "self-righteous."

- ❖ "I think part of it is the fact that they're indignant. They're indignant at the fact that you actually consider taking a life to maintain your own." [later] "They look at you with contempt and indignance and say, 'how can you do this,' and I say, 'with a knife and a fork.'" [Strong detractor; Male; 35-44; Graduate degree; Grants manager]
- ❖ [Describing PETA protests] "They bordered on extreme, I would say. I think the tone of the folks protesting... Just very angry. Can't make your point and let it stand on what it is, it has to be filled with contempt for people who eat chicken or kill chicken. It's not just stating your point of view, it's stating it in a way that's filled with bitterness and maybe even hatred." [Strong detractor; Male; 25-34; Graduate degree; Research assistant / student]

Most detractors and some neutrals and even qualified supporters also feel that AP-related campaigns and messages are based on exaggerated claims or even outright lies. These people seem quick to discount any argument that appears less than credible to them, and credibility is often influenced by their preconceptions and stereotypes. There is a strong perception barrier that AP advocates must overcome for most detractors and many neutrals before they will support arguments in favor of AP.

- ❖ “I’ve seen it before where groups just flat out lie about something just because they’re trying to make a point. That’s something I don’t tolerate. I want to know the truth, I want to know facts... If there’s no proof, why should I believe it?” [Qualified supporter; Female; 25-34; Associate degree; Retail Sales]
- ❖ “My problem with rallies is that they are more to get media attention and sometimes things are thrown out that aren’t really necessarily true. Things get taken farther than they should be sometimes, exaggerated.” [Qualified supporter; Female; 25-34; Associate degree; Retail Sales]

A. APPENDIX: NEXT STEPS AND HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

The completion of phase two of the NCAP research study provides members with a comprehensive understanding of US public opinion of AP organizations and advocates. At the 2006 annual meeting in Los Angeles, NCAP members will discuss these results in detail with emphasis on how to use the data for both NCAP and its members. The 2006 meeting program includes a presentation from Caryn Ginsberg of Priority Ventures Group with specific recommendations and thought-starters as well as time for general discussion among groups regarding how to apply the research results.

During the 2006 meeting and subsequently, these results will also be used to shape the design of the final phase 3 of the NCAP research project. Priorities for phase three will be discussed during the meeting and refined by the research committee in the following months. Results from phases one and two of this study suggest further research to quantify the public's views of specific AP-related ideologies, tactics, and issues. The phase three results will be aggregated with data from phases one and two to provide NCAP members with practical resources to help them improve their advocacy efforts.

For a complete appendix to this phase two report, including research participants' demographic and other details and select verbatim comments, please refer to the separate file available on the NCAP online membership forum. The forum can be accessed by members at <http://summit4animals.webexone.com>.

AVAILABILITY OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to this report and the separate appendix file noted above, NCAP members also have access to the following resources on the NCAP online membership forum:

- ❖ Analysis of secondary data relating to AP image and credibility
- ❖ Presentation of secondary data from 2004 NCAP annual meeting
- ❖ Phase 1 results and analysis (full and summary reports available)
- ❖ Phase 1 presentation from 2005 NCAP annual meeting
- ❖ Phase 2 presentation from 2006 NCAP annual meeting (as of mid March 2006)

QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions about this report, its use, or the availability of additional information, please contact Ché Green of the Humane Research Council (206-852-4848, cgreen@humanersearch.org) or Joan Dempsey of the National Council for Animal Protection (603-239-6446, jdempsey@netryders.com).